THE ORIGIN AND CHARACTER OF THE BIBLE

J. T. SUNDERLAND

Dr. Sunderland Retires to Give Time to Writing

Dr. Jabez T. Sunderland is to retire from the active ministry and devote his entire time to writing. He read his letter of resignation as pastor of the Unitarian Church in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., at the morning service on November 7. The resignation will become effective January 1. Books of Dr. Sunderland's include "Because Men are Not Stones," "Evolution and Religion," and "India, America, and World Brotherhood." He has been minister at Poughkeepsie since 1914.

He has served as director of the American Unitarian Association, president of the Michigan Conference, secretary of the Western Conference, superintendent of Unitarian church extension work in the West, nonresident lecturer on "The Religions of India" in the Meadville Theological School, and lecturer on "The Bible" in Sunday-school institutes and Chautauquas.

For ten years, Dr. Sunderland edited a magazine started by him, *The Unitarian*, a monthly publication with a large circulation in the United States and in England. One of his books, "The Origin and Character of the Bible," was translated into Russian and Bulgarian and has had a large sale.

His pamphlets have been published by the American Unitarian Association and the British Unitarian Association, and have been translated into German, Italian, Bulgarian, Portuguese, Chinese and Japanese.

Several years ago he was sent by the Unitarians of England on a special religious mission to India, where he lectured and preached under the auspices of the Brahmo Samaj. He also lectured widely in England.

In 1913–14 he was sent by the American Unitarian Association as lecturer to India, China, Japan, and the Philippines.

On his visit to India, Dr. Sunderland was elected president of the All-India Theistic Conference, and presided at the annual meeting at Karachi. He is president of the India Information Bureau of America.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/origincharactero0000jabe_k5y7

THE ORIGIN AND CHARACTER OF THE BIBLE

AND ITS PLACE AMONG SACRED BOOKS

BY

JABEZ THOMAS SUNDERLAND

Author of

"THE SPARK IN THE CLOD" (RELIGION AND EVOLUTION)

"TRAVEL AND LIFE IN PALESTINE," ETC.

BEING A REVISED AND ENLARGED EDITION OF "THE BIBLE ITS ORIGIN, GROWTH, AND CHARACTER," BROUGHT UP TO DATE IN EVERY PARTICULAR, WITH MUCH FRESH MATTER ADDED, INCLUDING A NEW INTRODUCTION, SEVERAL NEW CHAPTERS ILLUSTRATIVE CHARTS AND TABLES

ETC.

BOSTON

THE BEACON PRESS

25 BEACON STREET

1924

Copyright, 1893, 1908
BY JABEZ THOMAS SUNDERLAND

Entered at Stationers' Hall

SIXTH EDITION
1924

"Slowly the Bible of the race is writ,
And not on paper leaves, nor leaves of stone;
Each age, each kindred, adds a verse to it,
Texts of despair or hope or joy or moan:
Still at the prophet's feet the nations sit."

LOWELL.

INTRODUCTION.

A NEW view of the Bible, a distinctly "modern" view, is making its appearance in Christendom, and tending slowly to displace the "old view" which has been held so unquestioningly and so long. The change has not been sought or planned by anybody; it is simply coming about as the result — a result which nobody seems able to stop or hinder — of the greatly enlarged knowledge of the modern world.

The object of the present book is to set forth as clearly, definitely, and comprehensively as possible — it is hoped also candidly and fairly — this *Modern View of the Bible*, — what it is, reasons for it, and its results so far as they can be traced or foreseen.

Let me be more specific. Perhaps there is no subject of more living or more urgent interest now before the religious world than that of the "Higher Biblical Criticism" and its consequences.

What is the Bible? Is it such a book as for some centuries Christian nations have believed it to be? Or is it something very different? What has an honest, independent, and competent biblical scholarship — a scholarship which investigates thoroughly so as to find out the facts, and then speaks in the interest, not of any church or party or any form of theological dogmatism, but of truth — to tell us about the Bible, — as to its origin, its authorship, its

growth, the circumstances under which it arose, the causes which produced it, its relation to God, its relation to men, its inspiration, the changes which its various writings have undergone, its reliability, its place among the sacred books of mankind, its transitory elements, its enduring elements, its permanent value?

The following pages are an endeavor to answer all these questions, frankly, without evasion, reverently, and with as much fullness and detail as the space at command will permit.

This volume in its present form is in a sense an evolution. The beginning of the evolution was a small book, less than one half the size of the present work, entitled, *What is the Bible?* published by the Putnams of New York. This met with so much public favor that it soon seemed best to rewrite and enlarge it, thus making it much wider in its scope. The result was the first edition of *The Bible: Its Origin, Growth, and Character, and Its Place among the Sacred Books of the World,* published also by the Putnams. The present volume is that work carefully revised throughout and still further enlarged, and (as the author believes) in every particular brought up to date, so as to embody the results of the best and latest biblical scholarship. The following important additions have been made:

1. A new Introduction.

2. A Table of Dates of Biblical Literature, showing the Literary Evolution of the Bible.

3. A Table of Dates of important Historical Events, biblical and contemporaneous.

4. A Chart, classifying the Literature of the Old Testament and showing the various Canons and the true Chronological Order of the Books.

5. A Chart, classifying the Literature of the New Testament and showing the Chronological Order of the Books.

6. Many additions to the Text and Notes in various parts of the body of the book.

7. Four New Chapters (Chapters 16, 20, 21, and 23) on the following subjects:

(1) "The Old Testament Apocryphal Books."

(2) "Translations. Giving the Bible to the People."

(3) "Our English Bible."

(4) "Religious Evolution: A Historical Summary."

Is there any subject regarding which men and women in our day more need to make themselves intelligent than regarding the Bible? Is there any other subject of importance concerning which so many persons, otherwise intelligent, permit themselves to remain unintelligent? Is this as it ought to be? Is not want of intelligence regarding such a book as the Bible a calamity, not only to the persons immediately concerned, but to society at large and to the cause of religion?

The Bible is our greatest book. Knowledge of it and about it is indispensable. Nothing can take its place or make up for its loss. But it must be real knowledge. The supposed knowledge of fifty years ago will not do. There has been as much advance in biblical scholarship during the past two generations as in physical science. To cling to the conceptions of the Bible held by our fathers shows as much ignorance and blindness as to cling to the geology or chemistry of our fathers.

"They must upward still and onward
Who would keep abreast of truth."

The work of the great biblical scholars of the past century, and of the present day, can no more be ignored than can the work of the great scholars in any other important department of human knowledge. If we do not have a "new Bible" we at least have the old Bible completely transformed. Nor is the transformation for the worse, but vastly for the better. We lose fictions, but we gain realities. The Bible becomes a natural book, instead of an unnatural. It becomes a book that we can understand, instead of an enigma. It falls into relation now with all the rest of man's knowledge and experience, instead of being an anomaly. It becomes more than ever a world-book, because seen to be so truly a human book. The religion it teaches becomes larger and richer, as well as more ethical and infinitely more reasonable. God's character is relieved of much which under the old view marred and blackened it; for now we see that much which we had regarded as from God is only from very imperfect men. Thus God is made more worthy of our worship; and at the same time he is brought nearer to us, because he is seen to achieve his great ends by normal not by abnormal methods.

Inspiration ceases to be a thing of the past alone, confined to thirty or forty chosen men of ancient Palestine, and is seen to be as continuous and as universal as the influence of the Infinite Spirit of Truth; as the speaking of the Divine Voice through the reason and conscience of man; as the shining of that "Light which lighteth every man coming into the world." Revelation is no longer a little and local thing, or a thing dead, bound up and sealed in a single ancient volume. Now it becomes something living, perennial; something growing with man's capacity to understand and to reason; something as large as all truth.

"Out of the heart of Nature rolled
The burdens of the Bible old;
The litanies of nations came,
Like the volcano's tongue of flame,
Up from the burning core below,—
The canticles of love and woe.
. . . . . .
The word unto the prophet spoken
Was writ on tables yet unbroken;
The word by seers or sibyls told,
In groves of oak, or fanes of gold,
Still floats upon the morning wind,
Still whispers to the willing mind.
One accent of the Holy Ghost
This heedless world hath never lost."

In the light of the new biblical scholarship we are learning that God's real method of revelation is evolution; that his way of revealing the divine to man is through the evolution or awakening of the divine in man. In other words, we are finding out that the religion of the Hebrew people in Palestine was quite the most remarkable religious and ethical evolution of the ancient world, and that the Bible is the literary product and record of that evolution.

This does not mean that either the Bible or its religion is less divine than the past has believed; rather it means that the truly and really divine is larger, and its ways are larger, than has been understood. As man and the world are not less from God because they came by the path of evolution, so the great truths of the Bible are not less from God because they entered man's thought and life through the development of his own powers, through his own deep experiences and hence his own spiritual growth, through centuries of moral struggle, of battling with his lower self, of aspirations after that which was above and beyond him, of gropings — often blind and painful, but never wholly fruitless — after truth and right and God.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

THE PLACE OF THE BIBLE AMONG THE SACRED BOOKS OF THE WORLD 1

CHAPTER II.

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE BIBLE AND OTHER SACRED BOOKS . 17

CHAPTER III.

THE HEBREW LAND AND PEOPLE 34

CHAPTER IV.

THE BIBLE AS LITERATURE 44

CHAPTER V.

THE PENTATEUCH: WAS IT WRITTEN BY MOSES? 59

CHAPTER VI.

THE PENTATEUCH: ITS COMPOSITE CHARACTER AND REAL ORIGIN 69

CHAPTER VII.

HEBREW LEGEND AND HISTORY: ORIGIN OF THE OLD TESTAMENT HISTORICAL BOOKS 80

CHAPTER VIII.

HEBREW PROPHECY: ORIGIN OF THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETICAL BOOKS 93

CHAPTER IX.

PAGE

HEBREW POETRY: ORIGIN OF THE OLD TESTAMENT POETICAL BOOKS 106

CHAPTER X.

THE GOSPELS: THEIR ORIGIN AND CHARACTER. — I. 119

CHAPTER XI.

THE GOSPELS: THEIR ORIGIN AND CHARACTER. — II. 127

CHAPTER XII.

PAUL AND THE BOOK OF ACTS 136

CHAPTER XIII.

THE EPISTLES OF PAUL 144

CHAPTER XIV.

THE NON-PAULINE EPISTLES AND THE REVELATION. 154

CHAPTER XV.

EXCLUDED LITERATURE 164

CHAPTER XVI.

THE OLD TESTAMENT APOCRYPHAL BOOKS 173

CHAPTER XVII.

THE FORMATION OF THE CANON: THE OLD TESTAMENT; THE NEW TESTAMENT 190

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT TEXT: ITS FORMATION AND PRESERVATION. — I. 202

CHAPTER XIX.

PAGE
The Old and New Testament Text: Its Formation and Preservation. — II. 215

CHAPTER XX.

Translations: Giving the Bible to the People 222

CHAPTER XXI.

Our English Bible. 231

CHAPTER XXII.

The Moral and Religious Progress Traceable in the Bible 239

CHAPTER XXIII.

Religious Evolution: A Historical Summary 251

CHAPTER XXIV.

Bible Infallibility in the Light of Modern Scholarship. — I. 258

CHAPTER XXV.

Bible Infallibility in the Light of Modern Scholarship. — II. 273

CHAPTER XXVI.

The Bible and Inspiration 288

CHAPTER XXVII.

The Permanent Value of the Bible 297

INDEX 307

TABLES AND CHARTS

PAGE

A Table of Dates of Important Historical Events, Biblical and Other 38

A Table of Dates of Biblical Literature, showing the Literary Evolution of the Bible 58

A Chart, classifying the Literature of the Old Testament and showing the Various Canons and the True Chronological Order of the Books 68

A Chart, classifying the Literature of the New Testament and showing the True Chronological Order of the Books 126

THE BIBLE

ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF THE BIBLE.

CHAPTER I.

THE PLACE OF THE BIBLE AMONG THE SACRED BOOKS OF THE WORLD.

The Bible as a Sacred Book.—To the question, What is our Bible? scholarship makes, among others, this broad answer: It is one of the great sacred books or Bibles of mankind. The general verdict of scholars of widest knowledge is, that, taken all in all, it is superior to any of the others. But, however much it may tower above the rest, it is clearly one of a catalogue that includes them as well as it.

What are the other great Bibles of mankind? The most conspicuous are—

1. The Vedas of the Brahmans;
2. The Tripitaka of the Buddhists;
3. The Avesta (or Zend-Avesta) of the Parsees or Persians;
4. The Five Kings, or Chinese Sacred Books of Confucius;
5. The Tao-te-king, or Chinese Sacred Book of Laotse;
6. The Mohammedan Koran.

There have been, and are, other sacred books in the world besides these; these, however, are probably the

most important. Not to speak of the less notable sacred literature now in existence, such as the Upanishads and Laws of Manu among the Hindus, it is known that the ancient Egyptians possessed sacred volumes; and one of them—the Book of the Dead—has been brought to light, if not entire, at least in considerable part.[1] In Babylonia and Assyria, too, important fragments of what possibly may be called a sacred literature have been discovered.[2] The Greeks have not left us anything which we can properly call a sacred book. The poems of Homer are great national epics, but they have never received that "general recognition or sanction, which alone," as Max Müller says, "can impart a sacred or canonical character." Whatever the Celts, the Germans, and the Slavs may have possessed of sacred traditions about their gods and heroes, having been handed down by oral tradition chiefly, has perished beyond all hope of recovery. Some portions of the Eddas alone give us an idea of what the religious and heroic poetry of the Scandinavians may have been. So that I speak with sufficient accuracy, perhaps, when I name as the more important sacred books or Bibles of the world—the Brahman Bible, the Buddhist Bible, the Persian or Zoro-

[1] See Tiele's "History of the Egyptian Religion," chap. ii.; Renouf's "Religion of Egypt" (Hibbert Lectures for 1879), lec. v.; Rawlinson's "Ancient Egypt," vol. i., pp. 140–144.

[2] The remarkable religious hymns of the ancient Assyrians (received by them possibly from the still earlier Sumerians) present some striking resemblances to the Hebrew Psalms. They were gathered into a collection for ritualistic purposes, and seem to have been regarded as inspired. Lenormant compares them with the Hindu Rig-Veda. See Ency. Brit., vol. iii., art. "Babylonia," p. 191. Also, for fuller information, see Sayce's "Religion of the Ancient Babylonians" (Hibbert Lectures for 1887), and "Records of the Past."

astrian Bible, the two Chinese Bibles, the Mohammedan Bible; and, added to these, the Jewish Bible (our Old Testament), and the Christian Bible (our Old and New Testaments).

Sacred books or Bibles come into being naturally. They are a necessary and inevitable outgrowth of the religious nature of man. They may be divided into two classes. The first class embraces those sacred books which spring out of the general life of a race or people, and which therefore are likely to be of a more or less uncertain authorship, and to rest upon a background of legend and myth. The second class is made up of those books which spring directly from some great religious leader or prophet, and usually within historic time.

(1.) **Sacred Books which grow out of the General Life of a People.**—In the early times of a people, before they have a literature, and even before they have writing, there always come into existence great numbers of legends and stories, about wars, calamities, striking and mysterious events (as floods, earthquakes, the supposed creation of the world), about ancestors, kings, heroes, persons supposed to enjoy great favor with the gods. The more notable of these stories will be told from family to family, from tribe to tribe, from generation to generation, and hence in the course of ages will become the heritage of a whole race. As rude instruments of music are invented, and as the people gain the ability to sing or chant, these legends and tales will tend more or less to assume material forms.

When at length the people arrive at that condition of civilization in which writing makes its appearance, it is, of course, those hymns, ballads, and legends that are usually embalmed in writing first—these, and also sim-

ple magical formulas, directions for incantations, forms of prayers to the gods, and regulations for religious rites, all of which spring into being equally naturally, equally gradually, and often equally early. All these, because they come down from revered ancestors, and have the halo of a shadowy past about them, are naturally looked upon as peculiarly sacred. These become the germ of the future sacred book or Bible. As ages go on, other writings come into being, of one kind and another, some of which are of necessity religious or semi-religious, and some very likely ethical. By a sort of natural selection, the best of these, or such as meet with most popular favor, or are most in harmony with the religious feeling and sentiment of the people, are preserved, and grow in honor; while the rest sink into obscurity or disappear altogether. Those that have thus been preserved and lifted up into honor, as time passes away grow venerable, and by and by are added to the earlier sacred literature; and thus the Bible grows. These additions may be few or many, according to circumstances. But at last there comes a time, as a result of national disaster, or the stagnation of intellectual and religious life, or for some other cause, when a line gets drawn, and the sacred book gets sealed up. Anything written at any point of time on this side the line is not true Bible. Such is in brief the history of the origin of *one class* of sacred books or Bibles. As prominent in this class we readily recognize the Vedas, indeed nearly all the sacred literature of the Hindus, and our own Old Testament.

(2.) **Sacred Books which originate in a Man.**—The second class of sacred books spring from a *person.* A great religious teacher appears among a people, makes a profound impression, inaugurates a new religious move-

ment, or, if you please, a new religion. It is entirely natural that a new Bible should come into being as a result. His followers, of course, desire to preserve an account of his life and a record of his teachings. If he himself writes a book or a series of books, this or these will constitute the Bible, or at least the leading and most important part of the Bible. If, however, he does not leave behind anything written by himself, then, naturally, followers and admirers of him write out and preserve a record of his deeds and words as best they can, and these will constitute the Bible, or the beginning of it. As Bibles that have thus had their origin in a man, we name of course the two Bibles of China, which sprung from Confucius and Lao-tse; the Buddhist Bible, which sprung from Sakya-muni, or Buddha; the Koran, which came from Mahomet; and the New Testament, which is the outcome of the life of Jesus.[1]

With reference to the great Bibles of the world, in whichever of these two ways they may have had their origin, several things are to be said.

Time brings Sacredness.—Most great sacred books,

[1] The day of the rise of new religions and sacred books is not past. Says Dr. J. H. Allen in his "Christian History" (vol. iii., p. 240): "Quite within my own recollection, all the conditions have been found for the rise of an historical religion in at least four cases, and I know not how many more: that of the Mormons and Spiritists in America, the Bâb in Persia, and the Brahmo Somaj in India, to say nothing of Comte's 'Religion of Humanity,' or the revolutionary faith of Socialism. Probably all of these will soon be crushed out (if they have not been already) by special circumstances, or else absorbed in wider faiths. But under other circumstances either of them might well grow to be historically as interesting, if not so important, as Parseeism, Buddhism, or Islam." The Mormons have their sacred book or Bible called the "Book of Mormon," written by Joseph Smith about 1830. Also the new Christian Science faith has its sacred book, "Science and Health," written by Mrs. Mary G. Baker Eddy.

so far as we are able to find out, have acquired their peculiar sacredness mainly by age. The only exceptions are found in the second class—among those originating in a great religious teacher.[1] The books might have been much prized at first, or they might not; but all thought of putting them into a category by themselves, as sacred books, was, as a rule, absent at first, and only arose in after times and by slow degrees. As they grew old they grew sacred. As men passed on, away from the times and circumstances of their origin, they came by degrees to think of that origin as supernatural. The reverence that began to surround them was the halo of antiquity.

The tendency of the human mind is always and everywhere much the same; the individual thinks of the years of his childhood as golden years; the nation or race thinks of the age of its childhood as a golden age. Most peoples of the past have either worshipped their ancestors, or at least have thought of their ancestors as in some way more than human. Institutions, or customs, or traditions, or writings, or heritages of any kind that have descended through many generations, have invariably tended to become sacred in the eyes of those to whom they have fallen.[2] Particularly has this always been the case in the

[1] The Koran, Book of Mormon and "Science and Health" are exceptions.

[2] How age gives sacredness is well illustrated by the so-called Apostles' Creed (a name most misleading, since the creed did not come into existence until centuries after the Apostles' death—see Ency. Brit., art. "Creeds;" also Schaff's "Creeds of Christendom," vol. i., pp. 14–23) and by the Nicene Creed, both of which, on account of long use, have reached a degree of sacredness in the eyes of certain sects of Christians, little, if any, inferior to that of the Bible. It is a question whether the Breviary and the Missal of the Roman Catholic Church and the Book of Common Prayer of the Episcopal Church may not eventually reach the condition of sacred

more fixed and less progressive civilizations of the East, where originated the great Bibles of the world. Hardly one of these Bibles—indeed, hardly one of the writings or fragments of which any Bible is made up—seems to have been regarded as in any true sense sacred when it first came into existence. What the fathers prized the children venerated, and the children's children lifted up into the miraculous and the divine.

It would be interesting and instructive to take up, in turn, several of the great sacred books mentioned, and trace in detail the steps, as modern scholarship has been able to discover them, by which they advanced from the position of merely good and highly prized writings to the position of sacred books. But our space will not allow us to do this with reference to any except our own Bible. Suffice it to say, that with some of the books this advance was very slow, and took hundreds of years. In the case of the Vedas and Zend-Avesta it appears to have taken *many* hundreds of years—as is also true with at least some parts of our own Bible.

As regards our Old Testament, the idea of sacredness was attached first to the Pentateuch, or the "Five Books of Moses," or the "Law," as it was called. And the sacredness of even this seems to have been something very shadowy and intangible for a long time. The part of the Old Testament called by the Jews "The Prophets" came next to be regarded as sacred; while all that part then known as "The Writings," and including such books

---

books. They are already regarded by multitudes with a degree of reverence that can be called scarcely less than superstitious—a reverence certainly quite as great as was felt in the days of Christ for important parts of the Old Testament, and quite as great as was accorded at first to any of the writings of the New Testament.

as the Psalms and Proverbs and Job, which are generally held to-day in higher esteem than any other of the Old Testament books, did not come to be regarded as really sacred much before the time of Christ. Indeed, at the time of Christ all this part of the Old Testament was ranked much lower in authority than the rest.

As to the New Testament, certain Epistles seem to have come to be regarded as sacred, or authoritative, considerably earlier than the Gospels or the Acts. But for a long time—perhaps for two centuries—the New Testament writings were none of them looked upon by the Christian Church as standing upon the same high level with the Old Testament. And at least three or four centuries passed away before it was decided, more than in part, which particular ones, of the large number of writings produced within a century or two after the death of Jesus, should be included in the New Testament canon —that is to say, should be regarded as possessing divine authority—and which should be cast aside. But this subject of the formation of our own Scripture canon will come up for more extended notice further on. (See Chapters XVII. and XVIII.)

Fictitious Perfection: Facing Backward.—Another thing which may be said of all the various sacred books of the world is, that just as soon and just so far as a people have come to regard any book as sacred, they have begun to be blind to its faults, to take it as an ultimatum, and to be unwilling to seek for, or even to receive, anything as by any possibility better than it. Religion is always an advancing and a growing thing until it produces for itself a sacred book and also during the years or the centuries in which the sacred book is coming into existence. But the Book once completed, as a rule reli-

gion straightway ceases to advance or grow. Thereafter its eyes are not turned forward but backward. Everything thenceforth must be estimated as good or bad, according as it does or does not agree with the teaching of *the Book*. The fact that the Book has grown to be regarded as sacred, petrifies the religion it teaches, makes sacred every crudeness, every childish rite or ceremony, as well as every false and immoral doctrine which it contains, and which, but for the notion of a sacred and faultless book, the people would in due time outgrow and leave behind.

Thus it is that in India a single text of the Vedas (probably misinterpreted, at that) has resulted in the immolation of vast numbers of widows on the funeral piles of their husbands. Thus, too, it is, that we see many a religious rite practiced, and many an absurd doctrine believed to-day in Christendom, which long ago would have been laid aside but for the notion of a Book that is sacred, and whose every word, therefore, must be accepted, and whose lightest injunction must be carried out to the letter, as long as time lasts.

It has been estimated that the single Old Testament text, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," has caused the death of hundreds of thousands of innocent human beings. Such Old Testament books as Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, full of the records of inhuman wars, said to have been commanded by Jehovah, have been responsible, in no small degree, for the terrible war spirit which has wrought such havoc in Christendom during nearly every century since Christianity began.

Polygamy has always appealed to the Bible for support. Were not Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and Solomon polygamists? Yet these men are represented as special

favorites of God. Tyranizers over women have gone to the Bible for texts wherewith to justify their tyranny. So have wine-drinkers for texts to justify their use of wine. The biblical teaching that the insane are possessed of devils caused insane men and women to be treated in the most inhuman ways for centuries. Inquisitions, persecutions, and oppressions of all kinds have made their constant appeal to texts from the Bible to support their crimes against humanity.[1]

We have here an explanation of the very strange fact that so many excellent Christian people in this country only a little while ago defended slavery as something good and right. It happened that the people from whom the Old Testament part of our sacred book came, held slaves, and, in common with most other nations in that early age of the world, thought it right so to do. The centuries that have passed since that time have carried the world forward to the point where all the leading nations now see plainly that slavery is wrong. But the fact that the sacred book sanctioned slavery blinded many eyes. Instead of asking what was *right*, men and women asked what the *sacred book taught;* which was only equivalent to asking what was supposed to be right by a people of much lower civilization than ours, two or three thousand years ago, at the time the Book crystallized into sacredness. This was a fearful mistake, which resulted in arraying tens of thousands of as conscientious and kind-hearted people as the world ever saw, on the side of as dark and cruel, and in its spirit unchristian, an institution as has disgraced our modern world. Such are specimens of the evils that

[1] For a more full treatment of this subject, see chapters xxiii., xxiv., and xxv.

necessarily come from going back into the past, and taking a book written in an age long gone by, and *for* an age long gone by, and setting it up as a standard for the present age—as the various peoples of the world have set up their sacred books or Bibles as standards for all time.

Sacred Books tolerate no Rivals.—Another thing seems to be common with nearly all the great sacred books of the world, or, rather, with the believers in nearly all these books; and this is, that, as soon as any one of these books comes to be set up as sacred, or as a Bible, it is from that time forward regarded by its adherents as the *only* Bible, and all the other sacred books of the world are cast out as false. In other words, the process of canonization of a book, or of lifting it up from a merely good book into a sacred book or Bible, seems to be virtually a process of degradation or condemnation of all other books and religions. And so the Buddhist has ever been the bitter foe of the Brahman, and the Mohammedan of the Buddhist, and the Christian of the Mohammedan. Whereas, the evident truth is, each of the world's Bibles contains a great deal that is good, with more or less that is of no value, if not positively bad. Each religion has divine elements in it, as well as elements that are very undivine; and it is a great pity that the eyes of men should be blinded to this fact. It is not only a great pity that the adherents of other Bibles and religions of the world should be blinded to this fact as regards our Christian Scriptures and religion, but it is also a pity that we should be blinded to the same fact as regards scriptures and religions which are not Christian.

False Methods of Interpretation.—Vicious systems of interpretation inevitably arise in connection with

sacred books. These books, by reason of the infallibility claimed for them, become everywhere fetters upon men's minds. But the human mind was made for freedom. It may be brought to submit unresistingly to bonds for a time, but not forever. It must think and inquire, or die; and that means it must make progress in knowledge, or die. Hence we find that one of the most wide-spread and continuous struggles of the race has been that which it has made to escape from the bondage of the past and the outgrown, which the rule of its so-called "infallible" sacred books has always imposed upon it.

How can it do this? Generally it is unable to do it directly, but it is driven to methods of indirection. The means most often employed is that of new, and, it must be confessed, more or less perverted and false, methods of interpretation. Men allow themselves conveniently to drop into the background some of the more incredible or objectionable things which the books contain; they develop a marvelous facility in explaining away contradictions and inaccuracies and things which the increase of knowledge has shown not to be true, and in reading into the books in a thousand places all sorts of new meanings and so-called "deeper interpretations," to make the teachings of the books harmonize with the increase of knowledge. That which really belongs to the mind of the reader is attributed to that of the writer. The natural and simple meaning of the words is set aside. Forced interpretations are put upon passages for the purpose of compelling them to harmonize with that which it is supposed they ought to mean. Statements, doctrines, and allusions are discovered in the books which not only have no existence in their pages, but which are absolutely foreign to the epoch at which they were written.

This process of false interpretation is greatly favored by distance of time. Says Prof. Benjamin Jowett: "All nations who have ancient writings have endeavored to read in them the riddle of the past. The Brahmin, repeating his Vedic hymns, sees them pervaded by a thousand meanings, which have been handed down by tradition; the one of which he is ignorant is that which we perceive to be the true one." Says Max Müller: "Greater violence is done by successive interpreters to sacred writings than to any other relics of ancient literature. Ideas grow and change, yet each generation tries to find its own ideas reflected in the sacred pages of their early prophets. Passages in the Veda and Zend-Avesta which do not bear on religious or philosophical doctrines are generally explained simply and naturally, even by the latest of native commentators. But as soon as any word or sentence can be so turned as to support a [religious] doctrine, however modern, or a [religious] precept, however irrational, the simplest phrases are tortured and mangled till at last they are made to yield their assent to ideas the most foreign to the minds of the authors of the Veda and Zend-Avesta." This practice of interpreting into sacred books what later ages think ought to be in them, and out of them what later ages think ought not to be there, is pointed out and illustrated with regard to the Chinese, Brahmanic, and Buddhist sacred books, by Dr. Legge, Dr. Muir, Burnouf, Max Müller, and others.[1]

[1] The later Greeks regarded the writings of Homer with the same superstitious veneration, and interpreted into them all sorts of doctrines which could have had no place in the mind of the writer. For example, "they found therein the Neptunian and Vulcanian theory; the sphericity of the earth; the doctrines of Democritus, Herodotus, and of Socrates and Plato in their turn" (Parker's "Discourse of Religion").

Illustrations of the same with regard to our own Bible are more numerous still. Indeed, the whole history of Christianity is full of exhibitions of the most marvelous and unflagging ingenuity in inventing new interpretations of Scripture to keep pace with the growth of human thought and the progress of knowledge and science.

Almost every scientific theory that comes into existence is found to conflict in some point or other with the theological notions which an unscientific past has handed down. But the theologians are ever on the alert; and war is at once declared against the scientific intruder. All good men are summoned to the defence of the Bible. The conflict rages fiercely, and shows no sign of abatement until it is seen that the scientists are getting the day, when lo! it soon begins to be discovered by the theologians that, after all, the new theory is harmless, indeed, there is no discrepancy between it and Scripture. The discrepancy that had been supposed to exist grew out of a wrong Scripture interpretation. In fact, instead of the two being in conflict, the scientific theory is really taught in the Bible.[1]

---

[1] "As soon as science has won the assent of public opinion to any of its discoveries, or even established the preponderating probability of any of its theories, the religious world has ever made haste to declare that former interpretations of the Scripture have been mistaken, and that this new discovery of science is just what the sacred record has always taught from the earliest times down, if only it had been rightly understood. The six days of the first chapter of Genesis never meant days of twenty-four hours, but geological epochs. The Adam whose creation took place just four thousand years before Christ, was not, of course, the first man, but the progenitor merely of the chosen higher race. The Deluge was a local cataclysm or geological subsidence in the neighborhood of the Caspian Sea, etc., etc. As each past age read into the Bible its favorite theories—in Tertullian's time the materiality of the soul, and in Augustine's the flatness of the earth—so the interpreters and commentators of to-day with equal ingenuity can dove-

Thus we see a remarkable similarity in the methods of interpretation adopted generally by the adherents of the various sacred books of the world. Everywhere we discover the same facility in "explaining away" whatever proves itself troublesome in their pages, and in reading into them whatever new meanings the changes of the times and the growth of men's thought may seem to make necessary.

In one aspect of it, of course, all this is humiliating. Yet in another it is encouraging. It shows that the tyranny of sacred books cannot last forever. Sooner or later the right-thinking human mind revolts against it. To-day that revolt is more deep and earnest than ever before. Science, the printing press, the school, the spirit of free

---

tail the inspired record into every latest crinkle of scientific fact or fancy. Spontaneous generation, they tell you, is plainly taught in Genesis; evolution is anticipated by Moses; and Darwin and Job evidently had the same ideas. In the days of Garibaldi there was a popular story in England, ascribed to Disraeli, in which the objection made to a pleasant plan of marrying the Italian patriot to a wealthy English lady—*viz.*, that Garibaldi already had one wife—was triumphantly met by the suggestion of Disraeli that Gladstone could be easily got *to explain her away*. The 'reconcilers' of science and Scripture whom we have been speaking of, manifest a theological dissipating power of equal strength" (James T. Bixby).

Years ago John Weiss declared: "Soon it will be difficult to find an orthodox thinker who will not claim to be a disciple of Darwin; just as we have lived to hear the old-fashioned Whigs assert that they always were original Garrisonian Abolitionists."

"The doctrine of evolution is already almost triumphant. There scarcely remains for the recalcitrants any other resources than to demonstrate its perfect agreement with the [theological] dogmas they are not willing to abandon. The thing is in process of execution. The interpreters are skilful, the sacred texts obliging, the metaphysical theories ductile, malleable, flexible. Courage! We must be very narrow-minded, indeed, not to recognize in the first chapter of Genesis a succinct exposition of the Darwinian theory" (Letourneau, "Biology," p. 303).

inquiry which is abroad in the modern world, are mighty liberators. Sacred books will not be thrown away: they contain truth of too much value, and they have too central a place in the religious history and education of the race for that. But everything indicates that, at least in Christian lands, they will more and more be relegated to their proper place as servants of man: they will not much longer be permitted to fetter his intellect and dwarf his life.

CHAPTER II.

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE BIBLE AND OTHER SACRED BOOKS.

THE place of our Bible among the great sacred books of mankind cannot be adequately understood without at least a brief study of the similarities that exist between its teachings and those of other sacred books.

It is the tendency of dogmatists in every religion to affirm that their faith alone is true, and that their sacred scriptures are the only divine revelation. Christianity has not been free from such affirmations. But such dogmatism closes men's eyes against any possible broad and adequate understanding of either the world's religions or its sacred books. He who knows only one of the religions of the world knows none. He who knows only one of the sacred books of the world knows none. All sacred books are related. All the great historic religions are sisters. This has been pointed out to some extent in the preceding chapter. It will be the aim of the present chapter to make it plainer still.

All sacred books have much in common. This is true as regards the more superficial and less essential parts of their teachings—for example, their legends, their mythological notions, their accounts of miraculous events, their rites and ceremonies; and it is true, also, as regards the more deep and essential parts of their teachings—for example, their social and religious precepts, and the great body of their ethical doctrine.

(1.) Similarities of Teaching in Matters Superficial and Transient. — Notice first the teachings of the various sacred books with regard to the externalities of religion, and those intellectual conceptions which change with the growing intelligence of the race. Amidst all the variety, it is surprising how much of similarity, and even of identity, there is found in these things.

Sacrifices and *offerings* to the gods are common to nearly all religions, and laws and regulations therefor occupy a large place in the world's sacred books. We have been taught that the Jewish sacrificial system was a special revelation of God to his chosen people. But a study of the religions of mankind shows that that system differed little from those of many heathen nations. Not only did the sacrificial idea and the atonement idea come into Christianity from Judaism, but it is certain that both came into Judaism from heathenism.

Circumcision did not originate with the Jews, but was practiced in Egypt long before the Jewish people had an existence.

The rite of *baptism* is found to have existed long before the time of Christ, and in many parts of the world besides Palestine.

The *cross* as a sacred symbol is much older than Christianity, and common to many lands. The *Sacrament*, or Eucharist, or Lord's Supper, is found in essence in other religions.

The ideas of *divine incarnations*, immaculate conceptions, and virgin-born gods are found in many religions and Bibles. Nothing is more common in the mythologies of Greece and Rome than stories of children of the gods born of human mothers. The Egyptian Osiris was regarded as a divine incarnation. Buddha is repre-

sented as born without a human father. Confucius and Lao-tse both had miraculous births. Zoroaster is begotten by a ray from the Divine Reason. The later Hindu sacred books represent the god Vishnu as having been incarnated nine times. The seventh and eighth incarnations were in the persons of the Hindu warriors Rama and Krishna. The ninth took the form of the great teacher Gautama, the Buddha.[1]

The idea of *Messiahs* is found in other sacred books besides our own. The Chinese and Hindu scriptures contain prophecies of Messiahs to come.

Miracles are common to most of the Bibles, and even the very same kinds of miracles, such as raising the dead to life, healing the blind and lame, voices speaking out of heaven to persons favored of God, the Holy Spirit coming in the form of a dove, and so forth.

Thomas W. Higginson puts the whole case well, in his admirable little monograph, "The Sympathy of Religions," when he says: "We constantly meet [in the different religions of the world] the same leading features. We find the same *religious institutions*—monks, missionaries, priests, pilgrims; the same *ritual*—prayers, liturgies, sacrifices; the same *implements*—frankincense, candles, holy water, relics, amulets, votive offerings; the same *symbols*—the cross, the serpent, the all-seeing eye, the halo of rays; the same *prophecies* and *miracles*—the dead restored and evil spirits cast out; the same *holy days*—for Easter and Christmas were kept as spring and autumn

[1] "We meet again and again with the curious longing after a miraculous birth, claimed for the founders or propounders of new religions by their devoted disciples and followers,—as if there could be, or as if poor human reason could even imagine, anything more truly miraculous than a natural birth and a natural death" (Müller's "Natural Religion," p. 546).

festivals, centuries before our era, by Egyptians, Persians, Saxons, Romans; the same *artistic designs*—for the mother and child stand depicted not only in the temples of Europe, but in those of Arabia, Egypt, and Thibet."

Many writers on Buddhism have called attention to the curious similarity between the legends that have gathered about Buddha and those that have gathered about Christ. Both Buddha and Jesus are represented as of royal lineage; both are born of virgin mothers; the birth of each is announced by heavenly messengers; princes and wise men seek out the infants respectively, bringing homage and costly gifts. Having arrived at manhood, each passes through a season of supernatural temptation before entering upon his public work as a teacher; at the death of each the earth trembles, etc.

Perhaps even more remarkable is the similarity that exists between the rites, ceremonies, and ecclesiastical system of Buddhism and those of Christianity—at least, Christianity in its Roman Catholic form. Says Rhys Davids in his Hibbert Lectures: "Buddhism and Christianity have both developed in the course of fifteen hundred years into sacerdotal and sacramental systems, each with its bells and rosaries, and images and holy water; each with its services in dead languages, with choirs and processions, and creeds and incense, in which the laity are spectators only; each with its mystic rites and ceremonies performed by shaven priests in gorgeous robes; each with its abbots and monks and nuns of many grades; each with its worship of virgins, saints, and angels; its reverence to the Virgin and the Child; its confessions, fasts, and purgatory; its idols, relics, symbols, and sacred pictures; its shrines and pilgrimages; each with its huge monasteries and gorgeous cathedrals;

its powerful hierarchy and its wealthy cardinals; each, even, ruled over by a pope, with a triple tiara on his head and the sceptre of temporal power in his hand." [1]

All this similarity is very astonishing. We are told that when the first Christian missionaries went among the Buddhists they were able to account for it in no way except by supposing that the devil had forestalled them by going there first and planting among the people a counterfeit as much like Christianity as possible. In more recent times the effort has been made repeatedly to explain these resemblances by supposing that one religion copied from the other. But the careful investigations of scholars make it well-nigh certain that there has been little, if any, such copying, but that each religion has developed these features independently. It is found that the similarities between the stories that cluster about Buddha and Jesus extend also very largely to those that have sprung up around Krishna, Confucius, Lao-tse, Zoroaster, Osiris, Moses, Mahomet, and many other religious characters, fabled and real; and the ceremonial and ecclesiastical resemblances that appear between Buddhism and Roman Catholicism are scarcely more striking than those that appear between many other religions.[2] The truth seems to be that these are

[1] Hibbert Lectures, 1881, p. 193.

[2] For example, similarities almost as great may be pointed out between Judaism and Christianity, on the one hand, and the religion of ancient Egypt on the other. Says Prof. J. P. Mahaffy in his "Prolegomena to Ancient History" (p. 416): "There is scarcely a great and fruitful idea in the Jewish or Christian systems which has not its analogy in the Egyptian faith. The development of the one God into a Trinity; the incarnation of the mediating Deity into a virgin, and without a father; his conflict and his momentary defeat by the powers of darkness; his partial victory (for the enemy is not destroyed); his resurrection and reign over an eternal kingdom

all natural developments. Just as, under like circumstances, different peoples develop *industrially* and *socially* along parallel lines, so under similar circumstances they develop similar *religious* ideas, institutions, mythologies, and observances.[1]

(2.) **Similarities of Teaching in Matters Essential and Permanent.**—But it is not simply in regard to the more *external* and *unimportant* things that there is a great deal in common between the different Bibles and religions of the world; the same is even more emphatically true as regards the *deeper* and *more vital* things, particularly the *ethical* and *spiritual teachings* of the different Bibles.

Says Max Müller: "There is no religion—or if there is I do not know it—which does not say, 'Do good, avoid evil.' I wish," he continues, "that I could read you extracts I have collected from the sacred books of the ancient world, grains of truth more precious to me than grains of gold; prayers so simple and so true that we

---

with his justified saints; his distinction from, and yet identity with, the uncreate, incomprehensible Father, whose form is unknown, and who dwelleth not in temples made with hands—all these theological conceptions pervade the oldest religion of Egypt. So, too, the contrast, and even the apparent inconsistencies between our moral and theological beliefs—the vacillating attribution of sin and guilt partly to moral weakness, partly to the interference of evil spirits, and likewise of righteousness to moral worth, and again to the help of good genii and angels; the immortality of the soul and its final judgment; the purgatorial fire, the torture of the damned—all these things have met us in the Egyptian Ritual and moral treatises."

[1] For further information upon this subject see Pfleiderer's "Philosophy of Religion," vols. iii. and iv.; Réville's "Prolegomena of the History of Religions;" Tylor's "Primitive Culture"; Brinton's "The Religious Sentiment"; "The Sacred Books of the East," translated under the supervision of Max Müller, or other translations of sacred books; and standard works, generally, upon comparative religion, comparative mythology, and the separate religions of mankind.

could all join in them." After giving a translation of a prayer of some length from the Vedas, he adds: "I am not blind to the blemishes of this ancient prayer, but I am not blind to its beauty either; and I think you will admit that the discovery of even one such poem among the hymns of the Rig-Veda, and the certainty that such a poem was composed in India at least three thousand years ago, without any inspiration but that which all can find who seek for it if happily they may find it, is well worth the labor of a life. It shows that man was never (nor in any nation) forsaken of God."

It would be easy to fill a volume with extracts from the different great sacred books of the world, illustrating the essential identity of their teachings regarding many of the deep things of religion and life. But I must content myself with citing a very few.

The Sacred Books of the Hindus.—Here is a hymn from the Rig-Veda which cannot fail to call to mind some of the most exalted portions of our own Job or Isaiah:

"Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?
He who gives life; He who gives strength;
Whose command all the bright gods revere;
Whose shadow is immortality.
Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?
He who through his power is the one King of the breathing and awakening world—
Who governs all, man and beast.
Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?
He whose greatness these snowy mountains, whose greatness the sea proclaims;
He through whom the sky is bright and the earth firm;
He through whom the heaven was established,—nay, the highest heaven;
He to whom heaven and earth, standing firm by his will, look up.

Who is the God to whom we shall offer our sacrifice?
He who by his might looked even over the water-clouds—
The clouds which gave strength and lit the sacrifice;
He who alone is God above all gods." [1]

The following hymn, also from the Rig-Veda, needs only to have the word "Varuna" changed to "Almighty" to fit it for a place in almost any Christian liturgy:

"Let me not yet, O Varuna, enter into the house of clay;
Have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!
If I go along trembling, like a cloud driven by the wind;
Have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!
Through want of strength, thou strong and bright God, have I gone to the wrong shore;
Have mercy, Almighty, have mercy!
Whenever we men, O Varuna, commit an offense against the heavenly host;
Whenever we break thy law through thoughtlessness,
Punish us not, O God, for our offense!" [2]

Nearly every line of the following selections from two Vedic hymns reminds us of some passage in the Hebrew Psalms:

"The great Lord of these worlds sees as if he were near. If a man thinks he is walking by stealth, the gods know it all.

If a man stands or walks or hides, if he goes to lie down or get up, what two persons sitting together whisper, King Varuna knows it, for he is there as a third.

This earth, too, belongs to Varuna, the King, and this wide sky. He who should flee far beyond the sky would not there escape from Varuna.

His messengers descending from heaven traverse this world. The thousand-eyed Varuna looketh across the whole earth. The winking of men's eyes are numbered by him.

Wide and mighty are the works of him who separated the firmaments. He lifted on high the bright and glorious heaven. He stretched apart the starry sky and the earth.

Do I say this of my own self? How can I approach Varuna? Will he

[1] Rig-Veda, x. 121 (abridged). [2] Rig-Veda, vii. 89.

be pleased to accept my offering? When shall I with a quiet mind see him propitiated?

O free us from the sins of our fathers, and from those which we have committed with our own bodies! Protect us, O gods, always with your blessings!" [1]

The Sacred Book of the Persians.—Here are a few passages from the Avesta, the Bible of the Persians, one of the oldest and noblest of the world's sacred books:

"The will of the Lord is the law of holiness." [2]
"Holiness is the best of all good." [3]

Zoroaster asked the All-knowing, "What is the one recital of the praise of holiness which is worth all that is between the earth and the heavens?" And he answered, "It is that one, O holy Zoroaster, which a man uttereth when he would renounce evil thoughts, evil words, and evil deeds." [4]

Here is an allegory that is worthy of the New Testament. It is designed to set forth the influence of the conscience after death:

"At the end of the third night [after death], when the dawn appeareth, it seemeth to the soul of the faithful one as if his own conscience were advancing toward him in the form of a maiden, fair, bright, white-armed, strong, tall-formed, noble, of a glorious race, as fair as the fairest things in the

---

[1] From the Atharva-Veda, iv. 16, and the Rig-Veda, vii. 86. The penitential and ethical character of many of the Vedic hymns has often been pointed out. Says Professor Tiele, "Some of the hymns [of the Vedas], especially those addressed to Varuna, are marked by a deep sense of guilt, and the mighty Indra must be approached in faith. The doctrine of immortality, also, indicates the ethical character of the Vedic religion" ("History of Religion," p. 117).

[2] Yasht xxiii.

[3] Yasht xxiv. (Repeated in this Yasht eight times; also found in others.)

[4] Yasht xxi. 16, 17.

world. And as the soul of the faithful one spake unto her, saying, 'What maiden art thou, that art the fairest maid I have ever looked upon?' she answered him, 'O thou youth of good thoughts, good words, works, and religion, I am thine own *conscience*. Every one did love thee for that greatness, goodness, fairness, sweetness, victorious strength, and freedom from sorrow in which I appear to thee. When thou sawest a man making derision [of holy things], and doing works of idolatry, or rejecting the poor, and shutting the door to the poor, then thou didst sit, singing psalms and worshipping the son of the Lord, and with alms rejoicing the faithful from near and from far. I was lovely, and thou madest me still more lovely; I was fair, and thou madest me still fairer, through that good speech, good thought, and good deed of thine. And so, henceforth, men worship me for having long had converse with the Lord Omniscient. . . . The first step which the soul of the faithful man made did place him in the Paradise of Good Thoughts; the second, in the Paradise of Good Words; the third, in the Paradise of Good Deeds; the fourth, in the Paradise of Endless Light." [1]

We must confine ourselves to a single other quotation from the Avesta. That shall be a prayer, as high and pure as it is possible for the soul to breathe. Prays the sacred writer:

"The reward which thou hast given to those of the same law as thyself, O Lord, All-knowing, that give thou to us. May we attain to that, namely, union with thy purity for all eternity." [2]

The Sacred Books of the Chinese.—Lao-tse taught his followers "to recompense injury with kindness," [3] in this respect reaching the high-water mark of Christianity.

Confucius taught the Golden Rule centuries before Christ. It is found repeatedly in the Analects, the Doctrine of the Mean, and the Great Learning. Tsze-Kung once asked him the question, "Is there any one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one's life?"

---

[1] Yashts xxii. and xxiv. (slightly abridged).
[2] Vazna xi.
[3] Tao-te-king, chap. 63.

Confucius replied: "Is not reciprocity such a word? What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others." [1] It is often urged that this form of the Golden Rule is negative, and therefore much lower than that of Christ, which was positive. But is it true that there is nothing positive in the word reciprocity? Moreover, Professor Douglas, in his "Confucianism and Taouism" points out the fact (p. 103) that Confucius certainly gives the Rule in one place in a positive form, where he says:

"In the way of the superior man there are four things, to none of which have I as yet attained:—To serve my father as I would require my son to serve me; to serve my prince as I would require my minister to serve me; to serve my elder brother as I would require my younger brother to serve me; and to offer first to friends what one requires of them." [2]

Other teachings of Confucius are such as these:

"Filial piety is the beginning of virtue, and brotherly love is the sequel of virtue."

"Happy union with wife and children is like the music of lutes and harps. And when there is concord among brethren the harmony is delightful and enduring."

"No virtue is higher than love to all men, and there is no loftier aim in government than to profit all men." [3]

"Hold faithfulness and sincerity as first principles." "I do not know how a man is to get on without faithfulness. How can a cart be made to go without the cross-bar for yoking the oxen to?" [4]

"Worship as though the Deity were present."

"In the Book of Poetry are three hundred pieces, but the design of them all may be embraced in that one sentence, 'Have no depraved thoughts.'"

"Heaven penetrates to the bottom of our hearts, like light into a dark chamber. We must conform ourselves to it until we are like two instruments of music tuned to the same pitch. Our passions shut up the door of our souls against God."

---

[1] Lun-yu, xv. 23.
[2] Chung-yung, xiii. 4.
[3] Shu-king.
[4] Lun-yu.

The Sacred Book of the Buddhists.—The following passages from the Bible of the Buddhists are not unworthy of a place in our own Old or New Testament:

"If a man live a hundred years and spend the whole of his time in religious attention and offerings to the gods, sacrificing elephants and horses [the most costly and valued offerings], all this is not equal to one act of pure love in saving life."

"Not in the void of heaven, not in the depths of the sea, not by entering the rocky cliffs of the mountains,—not in any of these places, or by any means, can a man escape the consequences of his evil deed."

"A man who foolishly does me wrong, I will return to him the protection of my ungrudging love. The more evil cometh from him, the more good shall go from me."

"Hatred does not cease by hatred at any time; hatred ceases by love."

"All that we are is the result of what we have thought; it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain follows him as the wheel follows the foot of him who draws the cart."

"As the bee collects honey and departs without injuring the flower, so let him who is wise dwell on the earth."

"'These sons belong to me, and this wealth belongs to me!'—with such thoughts a fool is tormented. He himself does not belong to himself; how much less sons and wealth!"

"Let no man think lightly of evil, saying in his heart, It will not come nigh me. Let no man think lightly of good, saying in his heart, It will not benefit me. Even by the falling of water-drops a water-pot is filled."

"He whose evil deeds are covered by good deeds, brightens up this world like the moon when she rises from behind a cloud."

"Let a man overcome anger by love, evil by good, the greedy by liberality, the liar by truth."[1]

The five commandments of the Buddhist Bible are:

1. Thou shalt not kill.
2. Thou shalt not steal.

---

[1] These selections are taken from the Dhammapada, one of the books of the Tripitaka. The first three are from the version translated from the Chinese by Samuel Beal, and the rest from the version of Max Müller, translated from the Pali ("Sacred Books of the East," vol. x.).

3. Thou shalt not commit adultery, or any impurity.
4. Thou shalt not lie.
5. Thou shalt not intoxicate thyself.

The "Eight Steps" which, according to Buddha, lead to the highest happiness, are Right Views, Right Thoughts, Right Speech, Right Actions, Right Mode of Livelihood, Right Exertion, Right Recollection, Right Meditation.

The Sacred Book of the Mohammedans.—Says the Koran, the Bible of the Mohammedans:

"None of you can be a true believer until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself."

The following passage from the Koran is declared by Emanuel Deutsch to be a good summary of that sacred book:

"It is not righteousness to turn your faces toward the East, or West; for God's is the East as well as the West. But verily he is righteous who believes in God, in the day of judgment, in the angels, in the Book, and in the prophets; who bestows his wealth, for God's sake, upon kindred, and orphans, and the poor, and the homeless, and all those who ask; and also upon delivering the captives; who is steadfast in prayer, who giveth alms, who standeth firmly by his covenants when he has once firmly entered into them; and who is patient in adversity, in hardship, and in times of trial. These are the righteous and the God-fearing."[1]

Another passage of the Koran is this:

"Say there is one God alone—
God the eternal:
He begetteth not
And he is not begotten;
And there is none like unto him."[2]

Thus I might go on quoting from all these different Bibles at great length; and, judging from the sentiments

[1] Sutra ii.

[2] Sutra cxii.

expressed, no one could possibly tell which I was quoting from—the Bible of the Brahmans, the Bible of the Buddhists, the Bible of the Persians, the Chinese Bible of Confucius, the Chinese Bible of Lao-tse, the Mohammedan Bible, the Jewish Bible, or the Christian Bible—so nearly alike are all in their great central ethical and spiritual teachings.

In short, if we could carry our study far enough, we should find what Mr. Higginson says essentially true, that "neither faith, nor love, nor truth, nor disinterestedness, nor forgiveness, nor patience, nor peace, nor equality, nor education, nor missionary effort, nor prayer, nor honesty, nor the sentiment of brotherhood, nor reverence for woman, nor the spirit of humility, nor the fact of martyrdom, nor any other good thing is monopolized by any form of faith. All religions recognize, more or less remotely, these principles; all do something to exemplify, something to dishonor them." [1]

---

[1] "Sympathy of Religions," p. 25. For an extended comparison of the various sacred books and religions of the world with respect to their moral and spiritual teachings, see first of all, of course, the sacred books themselves, now mainly accessible in good translations (in the "Sacred Books of the East" series, and elsewhere); also the writings of the great specialists upon each separate religion. The following books of a more general character may also be mentioned as valuable: Tiele's "History of Religion"; De la Saussaye's "Manual of the Science of Religion"; Clarke's "Ten Great Religions"; the Hibbert Lectures (particularly the series by Müller, Renouf, Davids, Kuenen, and Sayce); the Gifford Lectures; a series of brief and inexpensive works entitled "Non-Christian Religious Systems," including books on Buddhism by Davids, Buddhism in China by Beal, Confucianism and Taouism by Douglas, Hinduism by Williams, Islam and its Founder by Stobat, and The Koran by Muir; Johnson's "Oriental Religions"; Max Müller's writings; Barth's "Religions of India"; Warren's "Buddhism in Translations"; L. H. Jordan's "Comparative Religion"; Carpenter's "The Place of Christianity among the Religions of the World."

The Difference one of Degree, not of Kind.—Of course, I would not be understood as claiming that all the great sacred books of the world stand on a level, or that their teachings are identical. They do not stand on a level, and in a thousand things their teachings are not identical. It is only a candid statement of the judgment of the scholarship and religious criticism of the world to say that our own Bible, particularly our New Testament, is greatly superior to any of the Bibles of so-called heathen peoples. But the difference is one of degree, not of kind.

It should be remembered that the passages quoted above are select passages—ethical and spiritual gems, culled from vast expanses of literature, much of which is barren and dreary to an extent which those persons whose reading of sacred scriptures has been confined to our own Bible can little understand. The contents of the world's sacred books range in quality all the way from the passages which we have quoted, down to the basest superstitions, the dreariest platitudes, the most childish follies. In comparing non-Christian Bibles with our own, of course, this needs to be borne in mind if we would make our comparison fair and candid. But just in the degree in which we make our comparison fair and candid, in that degree shall we see clearly two truths. One is this, that all the great sacred books of mankind (our own included) contain enough in common of things superficial, transient, and unworthy, so that no sacred book can say to the rest, "I am perfect, or wholly of God"; the other truth is, that all contain enough in common of things deep and high, and eternally true, so that no one can say to any other, "You are worthless, or wholly of man or of the devil."

Well does Matthew Arnold write:

> "Children of men! the Unseen Power whose eye
> Forever doth accompany mankind,
> Hath looked on no religion scornfully
> That man did ever find.
> Which hath not taught weak wills how much they can?
> Which has not fallen on the dry heart like rain?
> Which has not cried to sunk, self-weary man,
> 'Thou must be born again'?"

So, then, to the question with which this book sets out, "What is our Bible?" we have our first answer, to wit: It is one—beyond question it is on the whole the highest and best, but it is *one*—of the *six* or *eight great sacred books or Bibles of the world.*

Consequences of this Discovery.—Some would have us believe that this conclusion is inimical to religion. The truth is, it is very far from that. Rather does it help us to see that religion is a vastly broader and therefore a vastly richer thing than Jew or Christian or Pagan has been willing to believe.[1] Nations and peoples have ever

[1] "It gave men larger and grander views of God when they learnt that the earth is one among many bodies circling round the sun, and that the sun himself is one of the numberless suns that are strewn as star dust in the heavens; and (rightly viewed) it cannot fail to give each of us, whose nature is made to trust, a larger trust in, and more loving thought of Him, to learn that our religion is one among many religions, and that nowhere is there an altogether godless race. To use a homely figure, the religions of the world are like human faces, all of which have something in common—nose, eyes, mouth, and so on; while all differ, some being more beautiful than others. But wherever any religion exists which has struck its roots deep down into the life of a people, there must be some truth in it which has nurtured them, and which is worth the seeking; for the hunger of the soul of man can no more be satisfied with a lie, than the hunger of his body can be appeased with stones" (Clodd's "Childhood of Religions," pp. 8, 9).

claimed to have monopolies in religion; ever have they denied that it had any fountains beyond their own prophets, priests, and sacred books. But in the light of the scholarship of to-day we see that all such ideas are narrow and puerile. Religion is as universal as sunshine, or love, or God. Its fountains are in every land; its prophets dwell under all skies. It has given mankind not one sacred book, but many.

We may no longer believe that God chose out one little, isolated people of the world to be the sole recipients of his revelation and his salvation, leaving all the other peoples and nations of the earth neglected and uncared for.[1] The study of the great religions of the world, which is going forward so rapidly, is giving birth to the worthier faith, that God is the God of the whole earth. As Whittier sings:

> "All souls that struggle and aspire,
> All hearts of prayer, by Thee are lit;
> And, dim or clear, thy tongues of fire
> On dusky tribes and centuries sit."

Or, as Saint Peter declares: "God is no respecter of persons [that is, does not have pets and favorites among his human children]; but in every land he that reverences God and works righteousness is accepted with him."

---

[1] See Kuenen's "Religion of Israel," vol. i., pp. 5–12; Samuel Johnson's "India" (in "Oriental Religions"), Introduction, pp. 1–34; Max Müller's "Origin and Growth of Religion"; Carpenter's "Place of Christianity among the Religions of the World," 1904; Pfleiderer's "Religion and Historic Faiths," 1907.

CHAPTER III.

THE HEBREW LAND AND PEOPLE.

A SECOND answer that competent scholarship makes to the question, What is the Bible? is this: It is not *one* book, but *many;* indeed, properly speaking, it is not a book at all, but a *collection of literature*, or a *library*.

The word Bible comes from the Greek τὰ βιβλία (plural), which means *the books*, or *the little books*. Thus in its very etymology it reveals the fact that it is composed of *many distinct writings*.

As the Hindu sacred books are collections of the early religious literature of the Hindus, and as the Zend-Avesta or Persian sacred book is a collection of the early religious literature of the Persians, so our Old Testament is a collection of the early religious literature of the Hebrew people, and our New Testament is a collection of religious literature of the same people, springing from a later age.

If we would get a proper knowledge of this double collection of sacred writings, several things need to be clearly understood.

The Hebrew Land.—First a word of inquiry should be made about the land from which it came.

If there is anything in the theory that the physical environment of a nation or race tends to influence its intellectual and moral development (as doubtless there is), we need not be surprised to find it illustrated in the case of the ancient Hebrews.

The largest body of land in the world is that which makes up the three continents of the eastern hemisphere. At almost the exact centre of these three continents—at the very place where, if Europe and Africa were a little projected, the three would meet—lies the land of Palestine. It is a mere dot on the map of the world, yet in the moral and religious life of mankind no other land has been so influential. Has its location here, so literally at the "centre of the world," had nothing to do with this?

All the physical characteristics of ancient Palestine were such as would naturally tend to make a vigorous and independent people. It was a land of hills, valleys, swift streams, fertile plains, picturesque and rugged mountains, and rimmed on one side by a great sea. Such a land should produce strong-minded, nature-loving men. In mountain lands we expect to find lovers of freedom. Is it strange that we should find here a race sturdily independent?

Palestine was a singularly shut-in land. On the north were the Lebanon ranges of lofty mountains; on the east the wide Syrian desert; on the south another desert, and on the west a great sea with scarcely a harbor. It was just the kind of a country, therefore, to develop a self-centred people—a people capable of standing alone, and working out a great career. Yet, while it was thus so remarkably isolated, and protected from forces that might break down its strong individuality, it was to an unusual degree in touch with great world-influences.

Just beyond the narrow southern wilderness was Egypt, with its art and letters and learning, and its civilization the most venerable and august in the ancient world. On the other side of the eastern desert were mighty Babylon and Assyria. Contiguous on the northwest was Phœni-

cia, the leading commercial nation of antiquity. Across the western sea were glorious Greece and all-conquering Rome. Into quiet Palestine came influences from all these. Indeed, many a time it was forced to succumb to the armies of its mighty neighbors. And in times of peace it was a highway for the great caravans which were the bearers of the world's wealth between Mesopotamia, Persia, and India, on the east, and Egypt, Tyre, and all the Mediterranean cities and lands, on the west.

Thus it was near, indeed at the very focus of, all the greatest empires and centres of civilization of the old world. Yet it was not of them. It was touched in deep and powerful ways by all, yet was enough apart from all to have its own life not overpowered by them, but only stimulated, broadened, quickened, deepened. Hence it was exactly the land to develop the intensest, and in one sense the narrowest, of religions—yet a religion destined to unfold into the broadest, nay, into the one really universal, religion of the world.

So much for the *stage*, with its scenery and appointments, on which the drama recorded in the Bible was played. Now a word about the *players*.

The Hebrew People.—Who were the people that played the drama of the Old Testament and the New?

Among the families of mankind two stand out pre-eminent. These are the Aryan or Indo-European family, and the Semitic. To the Aryan family belong the Hindus and Persians of Asia, and the Greeks, Romans, Russians, Germans, English, French, and some other less important peoples of Europe. To the Semitic family belong the Hebrews and their kinsfolk, such as the Babylonians, Assyrians, Aramæans or Syrians, Phœnicians, Canaanites, and Arabs.

Where the Semitic family originated is not certainly known. Most likely it was in the highlands of central Arabia. From this region seem to have gone forth migrations to the northeast, into the valleys of the Euphrates and the Tigris, as early as two thousand five hundred or three thousand years before Christ.[1] These were the ancestors of the Babylonian and Assyrian peoples. A little later another migration pushed northwest to the shore of the Mediterranean, and founded Tyre and Sidon and the Phœnician nation. About the same time other Semitic tribes found their way to Palestine, driving out the preceding inhabitants and settling there. These were the Canaanites, who were in the land when the Hebrews entered. Other migrations pushed in other directions. The immediate ancestors of the Hebrews seem to have lived in Mesopotamia—the land between the two great rivers Tigris and Euphrates.

The first Hebrew migration into Palestine may have occurred as early as 2000–1700 B.C., a hint of which we get in the tradition of Abraham. Later there seems to have been a temporary sojourn of the Israelitish branch of the Hebrew family in Egypt. From Egypt it returned into Palestine for a permanent residence, about 1300 B.C., under the leadership of Moses. Here the history of the Jewish people properly begins. Our study of the origin and growth of the Bible will be a study of the career of this people for nearly fifteen hundred years.

And a remarkable people we shall find the Jews to be. In war, in politics, in art, in philosophy, in literature, other than religious, they did not excel. Among their own Semitic kinsmen, the Phœnicians far surpassed them in

---

[1] There are definite Babylonian dates as early as 3800 B.C.

commerce and industrial enterprise, and the Assyrians and Babylonians as military conquerors and founders of empires. But in religion their genius was supreme. It appears not to be extravagant to say that in the ancient world they attained to an eminence as much above all other peoples of the *circum*-Mediterranean world in religion, as did Greece in art, philosophy, and science, or Rome in war and government.

But it was something gradually attained—grown to. We shall never understand the Bible unless we first get a clear idea of this. The Jews no more occupied their high religious elevation at the outset than did the Greeks and Romans theirs. All came up by long and slow processes of growth and development from humble and rude beginnings. Just as we can trace Greece back to the time when she had no art, no science, and no philosophy; and Rome back to the time when her people were only a handful of well-nigh lawless barbarians; so we can trace the Jewish people back to a stage of religious development equally primitive and low, when they were not monotheists, when their gods were nature-forces, when bloody sacrifices formed the chief part of their worship, when even human sacrifices were not unknown; when, in short, their religion was scarcely, if at all, to be distinguished from that of other Semitic tribes round about them.

The Bible is the varied and many-sided record—often unconscious, but for that reason all the more wonderful—of Israel's progress from this low primitive condition up to the splendid height of that ethical and spiritual religion which we find in Jesus and Paul. It is the invaluable achievement of the higher biblical criticism of the past fifty years that it has made clear and indisputable both

DATES OF IMPORTANT HISTORICAL EVENTS,

BIBLICAL AND OTHER.

Some of these dates are only approximate.

	B. C.
In Babylonia and Egypt powerful Kingdoms and advanced Civilization as early as	5000–4000
Sargon, King of Akkad, and his son Naram-Sin, unify Babylonia and found a Semitic Empire, which includes Syria and Palestine about	3800
In Egypt the great pyramid at Gizeh built by King Khufu or Cheops. The Book of the Dead written	4000–3500
Code of Hammurabi of Babylon	2250
Palestine under Babylonian rule. Much culture, largely of Babylonian origin. Babylonian script in use	2000–1500
Migrations of Semitic Tribes, ancestors of the Hebrews, giving rise to the Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph legends of Genesis, possibly 2000–1600, but more likely	1700–1400
Palestine under Egyptian rule	1400
Moses, and Exodus of Israelitish tribes from Egypt about	1300
Conquest of Canaan; Government of tribes by Judges or Chiefs (Period of the Judges)	1300–1030
Samuel (Judge and Prophet). Consolidation of tribes	1050
Monarchy established. Saul the first King	1030–1010
David King	1010–973
Solomon becomes King	973
Assyria, brilliant historical epoch. Extensive Assyrian conquests in western Asia	10th century
Homeric Age in Greece	10th to 9th century
Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem dedicated	963
Division of Kingdom into "Israel" in the North and "Judah" in the South	930
Elijah, about	860
The "Moabite Stone," believed to come from about	850
Elisha, about	820
Foundation of Rome (supposed)	753
Great Creative Age of Hebrew Prophecy (Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah)	8th century
Kingdom of "Israel" overthrown by Assyria; many taken away captives ("Lost Tribes")	721
Hezekiah's Reformation, about	715
Sennacherib of Assyria devastates much of Judah. Jerusalem saved	701
Greece rising into importance	7th century

	B. C.
"Book of Law" discovered in Temple (followed by Josiah's Reformation)	621
Jeremiah	626–580
Fall of Nineveh	606
Solon, in Greece	640–559
Lao-tse, in China, later part of	6th century
Buddha, in India, possibly	623–556
Nebuchadrezzar takes Jerusalem	597
Jersualem destroyed; Kingdom of Judah broken up; many Jews carried into exile in Babylonia	586
Babylon Captured by Cyrus the Persian	539
Return of Jews from exile, led by Zerubbabel	536
Period of Persian Rule of Palestine	536–333
Confucius, in China	550–478
Dedication of Second Temple in Jerusalem	516
Ezra comes to Palestine with many more exiles	458
Influence of Priests and Scribes increases, and influence of prophets declines	5th century and on
Synagogues multiply and grow in influence	4th century and on
Translation of Old Testament into Greek in Alexandria (the Septuagint)	250–100
Desecration of Temple under Antiochus Epiphanes: Altar of Zeus set up in Holy Place	168
Revolt of the Maccabees	167
Purification and Rededication of Temple	165
Maccabean Period: Jewish Independence	167–63
Rise of the Jewish Sects (Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes)	2nd century
Cicero, in Rome	106–43
Pompey captures Jerusalem. Judea becomes a Roman Province	63
Hillel, the great Jewish Doctor of the Law	70 B.C.–6 A.D.
Herod rules Palestine, subject to Rome	37–4 B. C.
Augustus Emperor at Rome	30 B. C.–14 A. D.
Philo of Alexandria	20 B.C.–about 50 A.D.
Herod builds Temple (the third) in Jerusalem	19–10 B.C.
Jesus Born	5 B.C.

	A.D.
Public ministry of Jesus	28–30
Crucifixion of Jesus	30
Josephus	30–100
Paul's Conversion	35?
Paul's Missionary Journeys	48–63?
Martyrdom of James in Jerusalem about	63
Paul's Death in Rome	63–66
Destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans	70

the fact and the main steps of this remarkable development.

The History of the Hebrew People in Bible Times.—The history of the Hebrew people in Bible times divides naturally into six periods. These may be described briefly, as follows:

(1.) **The Formative Period.**—This begins with the earliest records, and comes down to about the end of the ninth century B.C. During this time the separate tribes are slowly drawing together and becoming knitted into one people, with one government, and a slowly improving religion. They discard various gods that they have formerly worshiped, and adopt Jehovah as their national deity. They are not yet monotheists; they regard the gods of other nations as real beings, and join much in the worship of the deities of the Canaanites; and yet they accept Jehovah as the God of Israel alone, and cling to and worship him as such. They establish and maintain a priesthood, and build a temple. There is yet much violence and cruelty, and moral ideas and practices are low, but there is progress. They set up a monarchy which, after a hundred years, divides into two—the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah.

No book of the Bible comes from this period, though fragments found in several books doubtless do.

(2.) **The Prophetic Period.**—This extends from the end of the ninth to the beginning of the sixth century B.C. The Northern Kingdom lasts nearly two centuries and a half, until 721 B.C., and then is overthrown, and many of its people are carried away captives into Assyria. The Southern Kingdom continues a century and a quarter longer, when it is conquered, and its capital, Jerusalem,

is destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, and its leading inhabitants are removed to Babylon, 586 B.C. Thus this period is one of political disaster.

But in the development of religion it is the most important and glorious in the entire history of the Hebrew people. Into this period falls most of that remarkable work of the prophets which resulted in the destruction of all other kinds of worship except that of Jehovah, and at last lifted the religion of the people up into true monotheism—ethical monotheism. Well has this been called the period of "fresh, creative youth of Israel." Certainly the Hebrew religious genius never manifested itself with greater spontaneity and power than in these remarkable centuries. From this period come the prophecies of Amos, Hosea, the first Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Jeremiah (in part), Deuteronomy, a considerable number of lyrical religious pieces, or Psalms, and a part of the Proverbs.

(3.) The Transitional Period of the Exile.—This is generally supposed to have been of seventy years' duration, but, strictly speaking, it lasted only about fifty or fifty-one years; to wit, from the fall of Jerusalem, 587 B.C., to the return of the Jews into Canaan, 536 B.C. It possesses some of the characteristics of the preceding period, as is seen by the fact that it gives birth to such important prophetical writings as those of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Obadiah, and the second Isaiah. Yet the conditions which produced prophecy are fast passing away. Prophecy is dying. The eyes of the nation are beginning to be turned from the future toward the past. We are on the verge of an age whose supreme desire will be to conserve, not to create. Reflection is taking the place of spontaneity. Unconsciously men are turning

from the living oracle in the soul and asking for written oracles. Thus we see these Exile years produce not only the prophecies just referred to, and many psalms, but Lamentations, Judges, Samuel, Kings, and the "Priestly Document," "*P*" (see following pp. 73–76).

(4.) **The Priestly Period.**—This extends from the return of the Jews from Babylon down to the second century B.C., when the last Old Testament books were written. As soon as the Jews return to their own land they eagerly rebuild their temple in Jerusalem, and resume in a sense their national life. And yet, from this time on, with the exception of the one brief, shining interval of independence under the heroic Maccabees (second century), they are a subject people, wearing successively the yoke, often heavy and always terribly galling, of Persia, Greece, Syria, Egypt, and Rome.

A little of the old prophetic spirit lingers on into this period. Haggai and Malachi come forward to speak their word. But, as a whole, the spirit that rules now is priestly and legal. "Israel has sought the one God and found him, and now feels that its task is to maintain his service and secure his favor by following *rules*."[1] The priests are in the ascendant; soon the scribes rise to great power; strong and growing emphasis is placed upon ceremonial. In the preceding period of the Exile the priests began to draw up ritual codes (as seen in the book of Ezekiel). This work of code-making they continue right on into this period, until the Levitical Law is completed, perhaps a little before the year 400 B.C.

From this period come (besides Haggai and Malachi) Ruth, Nehemiah, Ezra, Joshua, Job, Jonah, the Pentateuch

---

[1] Toy's "History of the Religion of Israel," p. 3.

(in its final form), Chronicles, Joel, Esther, Daniel, Psalms and Proverbs (completed), Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon.

(5.) **The Period of the Interval between the Two Testaments.**—We pass from the Old Testament to the New by a leap of one hundred and fifty years. This interval is often thought of as a time of no importance, almost a blank in Jewish history. But this is a mistake. It was in this period that the Old Testament canon was completed. It was at this time that those great schools of Jewish learning were established out of whose labors later grew the Talmud. Still more important, this was a time when all Palestine was seething with social, political, and religious thought as perhaps never before; when messianic and apocalyptic ideas, and ideas of religious socialism, were everywhere in the air; when there was not only wide-spread political discontent with subjection to Rome, but a growing distrust of the ceremonial and legal narrowness of the established Jewish religion, and an eager expectancy of something better to come, and to come speedily. We now see that all this was simply premonitory. It was Christianity, the New Judaism, growing within the womb of the Old Church, and waiting uneasily to be born.

(6.) **The New Testament Period.**—We may begin this period with the birth of Christ, although no New Testament book is written until about fifty years after, when Paul writes the first of his Epistles. We may properly close it with the last New Testament book, the so-called "Second Epistle of Peter," whose date is probably about 150 A.D. Thus its length is approximately a century and a half.

Into the first thirty or thirty-five years falls the life of Jesus, in whom the Hebrew prophetic spirit reappears, and

rises to its highest and crowning expression. After the death of Jesus the new religion is taught wholly by word of mouth for a generation; then such recollections and traditions of the Master as are best accredited begin to be committed to writing; meanwhile, letters and other writings which seem valuable, from the pens of disciples and others, make their appearance, and some of them are preserved by the young Christian churches. By and by the best of these writings are gathered together; little by little sacredness attaches to them; they come to be a new sacred book—the New Testament—which the Jewish people generally reject, but which the Christians place beside the Old Testament as a second Book of God.

During this period Jerusalem is destroyed with a terrible destruction, not only once, but again; and the Jews, after incredible sufferings, are scattered abroad over the earth, never again to have a secure abiding place in the land of their fathers and of their sacred oracles. Yet, in all the centuries since, nothing has ever been able to separate them from their faith. To-day they are as distinct and remarkable a people as when they dwelt in Palestine two thousand years ago, loving their religion with as passionate a devotion as in the days of their national glory.

Christianity has fared hardly better in Palestine than did the parent religion. Long before the end of the New Testament period its chief strength was in Gentile lands. This tendency continued. Now Christianity is a world religion; but its greatest triumphs have been won not among the people that gave it birth, not even among any of the Semitic peoples, but among Greeks, Romans, Franks, Germans, Slavs, Scandinavians, Anglo-Saxons —the peoples that make up the European branch of the great Aryan family.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BIBLE AS LITERATURE.

WE have found the Bible to be a collection of literature. Let us inquire for some of its leading characteristics as such.

Its Variety.—Perhaps nothing about our sacred volume is more striking than the variety of its contents. In this it surpasses all other sacred books. This variety grows out of the fact that it *is* so truly a *literature*, and not a theological or ecclesiastical treatise, or indeed a single book of any kind. Springing not from any one mind, but from scores and hundreds; not from one age, but from many; and being an embodiment of the very life of the Hebrew people, it could not fail to be as many-sided as human life itself. Thus it is not strange that we find it greatly varied not only in form, in matter, and in excellence of literary work, but also in ethical and spiritual quality.

There is hardly a form of literature known that is not represented here. At the beginning of the collection, under the name of history, we have an extended group of legends, traditions, accounts of persons and events in the main imaginary. Farther on we come to real history, yet even with parts of this we find intertwined a legendary element which has to be carefully separated. Then, too, we find poetry of various kinds, as lyric, didactic, dramatic; fierce war songs, tender love songs, sublime descriptions of nature, devout hymns of worship. We

find biographies, some brief, some extended; collections of laws; state documents; chronologies and genealogies; collections of proverbs of wisdom; accounts of religious institutions and ceremonials; romances; parables; speculations about the past; apocalyptic visions of the future; letters; religious utterances of various kinds, as of preacher, reformer, sage, and seer. Some of these writings have little merit in themselves, and owe such value as they possess mainly to the fact that they have a place in the sacred collection, while others rank with the very noblest literary and religious productions of the world.

Its Composite Character.—Perhaps the next most striking characteristic of the literature of the Bible, after its variety, is its composite structure. This, of course, does not appear on the surface, but to the student it reveals itself well-nigh everywhere. Alike in history, biography, prophecy, and poetry, he finds evidences of compilation, redaction, revision. Few are the books in Old Testament or New that do not show traces of more than one hand. Says Matthew Arnold, speaking of the earlier historical books: "To that collection many an old book had given up its treasures, and then itself vanished forever. Many voices were blended there—unknown voices, speaking out of the early dawn." Says Professor Driver, of Oxford: "The authors of the Hebrew historical books —except the shortest, as Ruth and Esther—do not, as a modern historian would do, *rewrite* the matter in their own language; they excerpt from the sources at their disposal such passages as are suitable to their purpose, and incorporate them in their work, sometimes adding matter of their own, but often (as it seems) introducing only such modifications of form as are necessary for the

purpose of fitting them together, or accommodating them to their plan. The Hebrew historiographer, as we know him, is essentially a *compiler* or arranger of preëxisting documents; he is not himself an original author." [1]

Says Prof. Robertson Smith: "A modern writer, making a history with the aid of older records, masters their contents and then writes a wholly new book. That is not the way of Eastern historians. If we take up the great Arabic historians—say Tabary, Ibn el Athîr, Ibn Khaldûn, and Abulfeda—we often find passages occurring almost word for word in each. All use directly or indirectly the same sources, and copy these sources verbally as far as is consistent with the scope and scale of their several works. Thus a comparatively modern book has often the freshness and full color of a contemporary narrative, and we can still separate out the old sources from their modern setting. So it is in the Bible. It is this way of writing that makes the Bible history so vivid and interesting, in spite of its extraordinary brevity in comparison with the vast periods of time that it covers." [2] Again says Professor Smith: "The Semitic genius does not lie at all in the direction of organic structure. In architecture, in poetry, in history, the Hebrew adds part to part, instead of developing a single notion. The temple was an aggregation of cells, the longest psalm is an acrostic, and so the longest biblical history is a stratification." "In poetical as well as in historical books, anonymous writing is the rule; and along with this we observe great freedom on the part of the readers and the copyists, who not only made verbal changes but com-

[1] "Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament," p. 3.
[2] "Old Testament in the Jewish Church," pp. 325–326.

posed new poems out of fragments of others. In a large part of the Book of Psalms a later hand has substituted Elohim for Jehovah. Still more remarkable is the case of the Book of Job, in which the speeches of Elihu quite break the connection, and are almost universally assigned to a later hand."[1]

In some of the prophetical books the writings of as many as three different authors are detected. All the Old Testament histories are compilations; some are compilations of compilations. The Pentateuch, as we shall see in another chapter, is made up of a number of different documents which wind in and out all through it, like strands in a cord.

The practice of compiling from earlier documents appears also in parts of the New Testament. Says Professor Smith regarding the Gospels: "All the earliest external evidence points to the conclusion that the synoptic gospels are non-apostolic digests of spoken and written apostolic tradition, and that the arrangement of the earlier material in orderly form took place only gradually and by many essays." "If a man copied a book, it was his to add to and modify as he pleased, and he was not in the least bound to distinguish the old from the new. If he had two books before him to which he attached equal worth, he took large extracts from both, and harmonized them by such additions or modifications as he felt to be necessary." "On such principles minor narratives were fused together, one after the other." The word "stratification" hints the process by which not a few books of both the Old Testament and New came to be what they are. It has been said of the

[1] Ency. Brit., art. "Bible."

Pentateuch, with as much suggestiveness as wit, that it is not Mosaic, but it is *a mosaic.*

Uncertainty of Dates and Authorship of Books.—Says Prof. Charles A. Briggs: "It may be regarded as the certain result of the science of the Higher Criticism, that Moses did not write the Pentateuch or Job; Ezra did not write the Chronicles, Ezra, or Nehemiah; Jeremiah did not write the Kings or Lamentations; David did not write the Psalter, but only a few of the Psalms; Solomon did not write the Song of Songs or Ecclesiastes, and only a portion of the Proverbs; Isaiah did not write half of the book that bears his name. The great mass of the Old Testament was written by authors whose names and connection with their writings are lost in oblivion."[1]

Says Professor Smith: "A large proportion of the books of the Old Testament are anonymous. All the historical books are anonymous with a single exception."[2]

Dr. Washington Gladden (and I quote from these men because they are recognized as conservative and "orthodox" scholars), writing of the Books of Samuel, says: "These books are generally ascribed to Samuel as their author. This is a fair sample of that lazy traditionalism which Christian opinion has been constrained to follow. There is not the slightest reason for believing that the Books of Samuel were written by Samuel any more than that the Odyssey was written by Ulysses, or the Æneid by Æneas, or Bruce's Address by Bruce, or Paracelsus by Paracelsus, or St. Simeon Stylites by Simeon himself. Even in Bible books we do not hold that the Book of Esther was written by Esther, or the Book of Ruth by

[1] Inaugural Address of January 20, 1891. Also see his "Biblical Study," pp. 222 *seq.*

[2] "Old Testament in the Jewish Church," p. 107.

Ruth, or the Book of Job by Job, or the Books of Timothy by Timothy. The fact that Samuel's name is given to the book proves nothing as to its authorship. It may have been called Samuel because it begins with the story of Samuel."[1]

Now, what is the cause of all this uncertainty regarding the authorship and dates of the books of the Bible? It is the result partly of the general literary carelessness of the times, and partly of the composite character of so much of the Bible literature, which has just been pointed out. Of course, if a book comes into existence by degrees, it is hard to date it. If it is compiled from two or three other works, it is a question whether it ought to be given the date of the act of compilation or of one of the original writings. If a book has passed through various revisions, it is not strange that the exact dates of some or all the revisions should be lost.[2]

So, too, if a book has two or three authors, it is a question which name ought to be attached to it; and it would be easy for both or all to be lost.

Nor does the difficulty stop here. Ancient Hebrew authorship was generally anonymous; nay, more serious still, it was very often pseudonymous. Our modern sense of literary proprietorship seems to have been wholly wanting in those days. If a man wrote a book, it was to have the book accomplish its object that he cared, and not to have his name attached to the work. The book would be likely to go forth unaccompanied by any

[1] "Who Wrote the Bible?" pp. 86–87.

[2] It should be understood that the dates which stand in the margins of our common English Bibles are wholly unreliable. The Revised Version discards them, as all scholars have long done. On Old Testament chronology see Kuenen's "Religion of Israel," vol. i., pp. 159–187.

name. If it had a name attached to it at all, it would be likely to be that of some distinguished person of a preceding age. Such a practice to-day would be severely condemned; but it does not seem to have been condemned by the literary ethics of ancient peoples, certainly not of the ancient Hebrew people. Thus, we have writings in the Bible ascribed to various persons, as Moses, David, Solomon, Daniel, and more than one of the apostles, which could not possibly have been written by these men, but are clearly the productions of later ages.[1]

Of course, this uncertainty as to dates and authors is one of the very serious difficulties in the way of a correct and trustworthy understanding of the Bible and the religion which it teaches. And yet, let us not be unduly discouraged here. Light is appearing; indeed, much has already come. It is one of the triumphs of modern bibli-

---

[1] On the morality of thus writing under the names of others, J. W. Chadwick, in his "Bible of To-day," justly calls attention to the *motive* of the writers, which, beyond question, was generally unselfish and high. He says: "There is this at least to be said for those who, like the authors of 'Daniel' and 'Deuteronomy,' put forth their own writings as the writings of illustrious men who had lived long before: it was not for themselves they desired the honor and authority which would accrue from such a course; no, but only for the word they had to speak, the cause they wished to serve. If only this might prosper, they were willing to remain forever in obscurity. And there they have remained until this day. The authors of Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, are all unknown to us. The greatest, too, of all the prophets is, and must ever be, the Great Unknown (Isaiah xl.-lvi.). And with the Pentateuch it is just the same. The Yahwehist, the Elohist, the Deuteronomist—men who created, or at least collected, a literature which has had a more commanding influence than any other on the fortunes of the world, the fountain-head of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—are all unknown to us. They died to fame that Israel might live for righteousness, and for the honor of her God" (pp. 94–95).

cal scholarship that so much knowledge, which seemed to be lost forever, has been recovered, as we shall see when we come to study the various books separately in the following chapters. It is enough to say here that the oldest books of the Bible date with almost absolute certainty from the eighth century before Christ, though fragments go back much farther—some possibly to the time of Moses. From this date the stream of literary production continues to flow, with only one important check—that between the Old Testament and the New—until the middle of the second century after Christ, when the last book of the New Testament was written. Thus, we see that some portions of this literature which forms our volume of sacred Scriptures made their appearance in the very morning of Hebrew civilization, while other portions did not come into being until the nation had passed through long and remarkable experiences of prosperity and adversity, involving contact with some of the richest civilizations of the ancient world.

Non-Chronological Arrangement of the Books.—If we are to understand the Bible, one thing more should be pointed out, quite as important as anything that we have yet noticed. It is the fact that the books of both the Old Testament and the New do not stand in the order of their time of composition, or of the progress of the religious history with which they have to do, but in an order that is wholly arbitrary and seriously misleading. Notice this first in the Old Testament. A few examples will make it plain.

(*a*) At the very beginning of the Bible we find a book called Genesis. Because it stands first, and because it purports to give an account of the creation and of the earliest ages of the world, we take for granted that it is

the earliest Old Testament book. But we are mistaken; it is one of the latest.

(*b*) Far on past the middle of the Bible, near the end of the Old Testament, we find the short books of prophecy called Micah, Hosea, and Amos. We think, of course, that these books were written late, else why are they given a place so far on toward the end of the volume? But we are mistaken again. As a fact, these are our very oldest Scripture books; they were written centuries before the book of Genesis.

(*c*) About the middle of the Bible we find a book called the Psalms. Accepting the common view, we suppose we have here a body of writings, mainly from the pen of David, dating from about the year 1000 B.C. But again we are wrong. In fact, this is the Hebrew Psalter, or Hymn Book, a collection, or, rather, a succession of collections, of religious hymns, few or none of them written by David, few or none as old as the time of David, but really produced by writers whose names are generally lost, living in the various centuries from David's day down to within perhaps a hundred and fifty years of the Christian Era.

(*d*) Immediately following the Psalms we come upon three books called the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. Accepting the traditional belief, we take it that these writings are from King Solomon's pen. But here again biblical scholarship says no; the only one of the books that Solomon can have had any connection with (and that only slight) is Proverbs; the other two were composed long after his time, and by authors who are unknown.

(*e*) Immediately following the so-called Song of Solomon is a long book called Isaiah. The traditional view is

that it was written by a great prophet of that name in the eighth century before Christ. We try to read the book with this understanding of it in mind. In the first part of the book all goes well, but as we advance to the latter part we find ourselves falling into utter confusion as to dates and sequences of events. What is the trouble? Simply that the book is not one, but two or more written at different dates. Scholars have found out that the Isaiah of the eighth century wrote only the first thirty-nine chapters of the book; the remaining twenty-seven chapters were written by a prophet or prophets who lived during the Babylonian exile. Indeed, portions may have a later date still.

(*f*) A little farther on than Isaiah we find a prophetical book called Daniel. Our common version gives its date as between 607 and 534 B.C. But scholars find its real date to be, almost beyond question, about 165 B.C.

(*g*) I will take only one more example, but that shall be the most important of all. The first five books of the Bible are called the Five Books of Moses, or the Pentateuch. They contain, among other things, an elaborate code of laws for the organization of the Jewish nation and the conduct of its worship. Unless we have looked below the surface, we take for granted that Moses actually wrote this code, and that the Jewish government and worship were actually organized and set in operation on the plan here indicated. With this thought in mind we read the rest of the Old Testament and try to understand it. But we are baffled everywhere. As we proceed in our reading we find everything confused—there is no order; there is no natural sequence of events; there is no growth or progress. As soon as we get through these so-called Five Books of Moses, in which this ecclesiastical

and civil government is described and represented as set up, we come to the historical books of Joshua, Judges, and Samuel. These purport to give us the history of the people for three hundred years after this Mosaic government begins. But, to our astonishment, there is no trace of any such government. Throughout the long period of the Judges there is little else but political and ecclesiastical chaos. There is no trace of a sacred constitution binding upon all. The "Law of the Lord" is not a written document, but a living word in the breasts and on the lips of men. The priests, instead of having all power, have very little. Power is wielded by the heads of families and tribes, who control the public worship and appoint priests or depose them at their pleasure. The idea of such a hierocracy as that described in Exodus and Leviticus seems to have entered the mind of nobody. As we read on, some traces of civil order begin gradually to appear; the scattered tribes draw together, largely for protection against common enemies; civil law more and more takes the place of the rule of the strongest. By and by the people get unified enough to want a king; then a hereditary monarchy is established, which continues on, first in one line and then in two, for centuries. But all this time there is no sign of that ecclesiastical government which Moses is represented as having set up —no indication that anybody knows of the Levitical legislation. Thus the idea that such a government has been established continually confuses us.

When we get down to the time of the earlier prophets it is no better. We have the writings of a number of these. But they make no references to the Levitical code; on the contrary, they write constantly as if there were no such thing in existence.

We come on down to the period of Jewish history which lies on this side the exile to Babylon, and all of a sudden the Levitical system appears. From this time forward it is the centre of everything. From this time the written law of Moses is the authority to which all appeal is made; everything begins to revolve about the priests and Levites; the Jews, to borrow the language of the Koran, are henceforward "the people of the Book"; and "the cultus, with its burnt-offerings and sin-offerings, its purifications and abstinences, its feasts and Sabbaths, strictly observed as prescribed by the law, is now the principal business of life."

Now, how is all this to be explained? It can be explained only in one way. The Levitical Law cannot have been given to the Jewish people by Moses; the real time of its origin is this later age, near the time of the Babylonish exile.

This discovery, the most important made by biblical scholarship last century, is found to be the key that unlocks the Old Testament. Of course, an idea so revolutionary was at first fought on all hands and in the severest manner. But, slowly, leading scholars of Germany, Holland, and France, and then of England and America, have found themselves compelled to accept it, until now hardly one of first rank dissents. The literature of Old Testament introduction and exegesis is being fast rewritten in the light of this luminous thought, which is found to be scarcely less important in bringing order into Old Testament studies than was Darwin's thought of progress by survival of the fittest, or Newton's of gravitation, in bringing order into studies of physical nature. The confusion which reigned throughout all Old Testament history, and made every book from Genesis

to Malachi a puzzle, so long as the traditional view was maintained that the Levitical Law was written at the Exodus and imposed upon the Jewish people at the beginning of their history, now passes away. We now see order; we now see sequence; we now see growth and progress; we now see that the elaborate ecclesiastical system of later Judaism came into existence when the people were ready for it, and through causes which can be clearly traced. The Jewish religion now takes its place among the other religions of the world as an evolution; the Old Testament we can now understand.[1]

Passing on to the New Testament, we find that the books here also, as well as in the older collection, are placed in a wrong chronological order. Let me cite two or three illustrations.

(*a*) In the present order of arrangement the Gospels stand first. Chronologically, they belong well over in the volume.

---

[1] Professor Pfleiderer thus contrasts the old traditional view of Israelitish history, which accepts the Levitical code as from Moses, and sets it up as an authority over the Hebrew people at the beginning of their career in Palestine, with the new view which makes that code a late development: "There" [according to the old view], he says, "we had from beginning to end [of Hebrew history] a series of riddles, of psychological and historical puzzles; here [in the light of the new view] everything is comprehensible; we have a clear development, analogous to the rest of history; the external history of the nation and the internal history of its religious consciousness in constant accord and fruitful intercourse; and though not an unbroken advance in a straight line of the whole people, still a laborious struggle of the representatives of the higher truth with the stolid masses, a struggle in which success and defeat succeed each other in dramatic alternation, and even failure only serves to aid the evolution of the idea itself in ever greater purity from its original integuments. This is human history, full of marvels and of divine revelation, but nowhere interrupted by miracle or by sudden, unaccountable transitions" ("Development of Theology," p. 274.)

(*b*) Paul's Epistles now have places in the second half. But they were written before any other New Testament books, and therefore, in a true chronological order, they would stand at the beginning.

(*c*) The Gospel which bears the name of John, at present follows immediately after those of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. It probably ought to stand nearly at the end of the New Testament.

(*d*) At the end, now, we find that strange book whose place in the Bible has always been regarded as so questionable; namely, the Revelation, or the Apocalypse. But if this book is to be included at all, it should certainly be removed from the place which it now occupies, for in the judgment of no school of biblical scholars is it the latest of the New Testament writings.

This lack alike of chronological and logical order (for it is both) which extends to nearly or quite all the New Testament books, is seriously confusing. Indeed, there is no such thing possible as understanding the New Testament until we recognize it; as there was no possibility of understanding the Old Testament until the similar lack of order there was understood. But, fortunately, here, as there, scholarship has been at work with a perseverance and an insight which laugh at all obstacles. As a result, it has not only torn down the false old, but has gone far to build up a better new. We are given at last, not indeed in all cases with perfect certainty yet, but with strong and growing probability, the true order of the production of most of the New Testament writings.

The importance of this knowledge can hardly be estimated. It is a key everywhere applicable in the study of the New Testament, and found able to unlock countless difficulties. With it in our hand, here, too, as well

as in the Old Testament, order and sequence begin at last to appear. We find ourselves once more in a world where laws of cause and effect are operative. Now we are able to discover an orderly unfolding of events and a logical growth of thought throughout these times and these writings, which before were such a labyrinth of confusion. Now the origin of the New Testament and of Christianity begins for the first time to become intelligible.

DATES OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE,

SHOWING THE LITERARY EVOLUTION OF THE BIBLE.

Many of these dates are only approximate.

	B. C.
The Song of the Well. Numbers xxi: 17, 18. Fragment of an old popular song; probable date	1300–1100
The Song of Deborah. Judges v. An ancient war ballad of striking poetical qualities. Date probably	1200–1100
The Fable of Jotham. Judges ix: 7 sq.	1200–1100
The Blessing of Jacob. Genesis xlix	1100–950
David's Lament over Jonathan. 2 Samuel i: 17 sq. Almost certainly from David, and showing that the writer was possessed of high poetical gifts	1000
The Parable of Nathan. 2 Samuel xii: 1–4	1000
The Prophesies (or speeches) of Balaam. Numbers xxiii, xxiv	1000–950
The Blessing of Moses. Deuteronomy xxxiii	800–750
(There are many more fragments of one kind or another from earlier ages imbedded in the narrative books of the Old Testament. The above are perhaps the most important.)	
The Prophetic Narrative or "Document" of the Hexateuch known to scholars as "J," compiled about	850–800
The Prophetic Narrative or "Document" "E," compiled about	800–750
(The first six books of the Old Testament — the so-called "Five Books of Moses," or Pentateuch, and Joshua — are made up of what are known as Documents "J," "E," "D," and "P" (not to mention others less important), compiled at different dates and finally blended to form the Hexateuch as we now have it.)	
Amos, the earliest prophetical book, indeed the earliest written book of the Bible	750
Hosea	746–722
Isaiah (the main parts of chapters i-xxxix)	740–700
Micah	735–702
Documents "J" and "E" combined	650–625
Deuteronomy (Document "D") written	650–621
Nahum, about	630
Zephaniah	630

	B. C.
Discovery of the "Book of the Law" (Deuteronomy, Document "D") in the Temple	621
Jeremiah	626–580
Proverbs, earliest collection (x: 1-xxii: 16) perhaps	621–600
Psalms. Many individual psalms doubtless written before the Exile. (Probably no collection made until the time of Ezra, in the fifth century).	
Habakkuk	605
Ezekiel	593–570
Obadiah, about	580
Lamentations	580
Priestly Document, "P," main parts compiled	560–500
The "Second Isaiah" (Isaiah xl-lv and perhaps lvi-lxvi) about	540
Zechariah (some parts late) earliest part, chapters i-viii.	520
Haggai	520
Judges	560–500
1 and 2 Samuel (formerly one book)	560–500
1 and 2 Kings (formerly one book)	560–500
Joshua	450–400
Job, possibly written during the Exile; more likely	450–400
Priestly Document, "P," published to the people by Ezra as the "Law of the Lord," the "Law of Moses," the "Book of the Law"	444?
Ruth	430
Malachi	420
Jonah, written as a protest against the narrow spirit of Ezra, probably about	420
Joel	400
Completion of the Pentateuch by a union of "J," "E," "D," and "P"	400
Genesis, in its present form	400
Exodus, in its present form	400
Leviticus, in its present form	400
Numbers, in its present form	400
Canon of "The Law" completed	400–300
Song of Solomon	300–200
Ezra in its present form (based on earlier "Memoirs of Ezra") about	300
Nehemiah in its present form (based on earlier "Memoirs of Nehemiah") about	300
1 and 2 Chronicles (originally one book)	300
Canon of "The Prophets" completed	300–200
Ecclesiastes	250–175
Translation of the Old Testament into Greek by Jewish Scholars in Alexandria (the Septuagint)	250–100
Esther	200

	B. C.
Tobit (O. T. Apocrypha)	200
Proverbs, final collection	200–150
Ecclesiasticus, or the Wisdom of Jesus the son of Sirach (O. T. Apocrypha)	190–170
Daniel	168–165
Enoch (O. T. Pseudepigrapha)	168–105
Psalms, date of final collection, about	150
Wisdom of Solomon (O. T. Apocrypha)	150–50
Judith (O. T. Apocrypha)	135–125
1 Maccabees (O. T. Apocrypha), about	100

	A. D.
1 Thessalonians	53–54
2 Thessalonians, if from Paul	54
(If not Paul's about 70)	
Galatians	56
1 and 2 Corinthians	57–58
Romans	58
Philemon	62–63
Philippians	62–63
Gospel according to the Hebrews (an early Gospel of which only fragments are preserved. See p. 122). According to Harnack about	65
Gospel of Mark	70–75
Hebrews	75–78
Gospel of Matthew	75–90
1 Peter	81–96
James	85–95
(If by James the brother of Jesus, not later than 50)	
Gospel of Luke	85–100
Acts	85–100
Old Testament Canon, virtual final settlement of, by the Jews at the Synod at Jamnia	90–100
First Epistle of Clement (regarded as true scripture by many early churches) date (Harnack)	93–95
Colossians, if not Paul's, as late as	100
Ephesians, if not Paul's, as late as	100
(If Paul's 63)	
1 and 2 Timothy	100–110
(There may be passages from Paul of much earlier date in 2 Timothy).	
Titus	100–110
1, 2, and 3 John, not earlier than	100–110
(Possibly as late as 130–140. If by John the Apostle, 95–98)	
Gospel of John	100–110

	A. D.
(Possibly much later; many high authorities think as late as 140–150)	
Jude	100–130
Preaching of Peter (N. T. Apocrypha)	100–130
The Seven Ignatian Epistles (much read in the early churches) a little earlier than	117
The Epistle of Polycarp (much read in the early churches)	110–117
Apocalypse of Peter (N. T. Apocrypha)	120–140
The Epistle of Barnabas (regarded as true scripture by many early churches)	130
The Didachê (much read in the early churches)	131–160
Revelation, nucleus 66–70; final form	136
Shepherd of Hermas (regarded as true scripture by many early churches)	115–140
2 Peter	150
Bible Canon. A Council of African Bishops (not a Universal Council), held at Hippo, agreed upon a Canon which included all the books of our present Protestant Bible, plus the Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Tobit, Judith, and two books of Maccabees	393
A Council held at Carthage reaffirmed the list of its predecessor	397
The Vatican Manuscript (Greek) containing the Old Testament nearly complete and most of the New Testament; date early in the	4th century
The Sinaitic Manuscript (Greek) containing the New Testament and twenty books of the Old Testament; date the 4th century probably about	331
The Alexandrian Manuscript (Greek) containing the Old and New Testaments nearly complete, plus many Apocryphal books; date middle of the	5th century
Earliest Hebrew Manuscript of any part of the Old Testament (the Prophet Codex)	916
Earliest Hebrew Manuscript of the entire Old Testament	1009
Vulgate (Authorized Bible of the Roman Catholic church); translation into Latin, largely by Jerome	383–404
Division of the Bible into our present chapters, shortly before	1228
Wycliffe's Translation of the Bible into English	1382
First Printed Bible (the Latin Vulgate)	1455
First Printed Hebrew Bible	1488
Canon of the Bible established for the Roman Catholic Church by the Council of Trent	1545–1546
Division of the Bible into its present verses	1555
Authorized Version of the Bible in English (King James')	1611
The Revised Version	1885
The American Standard Revised Version	1901

CHAPTER V.

THE PENTATEUCH: WAS IT WRITTEN BY MOSES?

If we turn to the beginning of our Bible we shall find the Book of Genesis, with which the volume opens, called "The First Book of Moses." Turn to the next four books, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, and we shall find these called respectively the "Second," the "Third," the "Fourth," and the "Fifth Book of Moses." If we could go back to the time of Christ, we should find the Jews speaking of these five books as one, and calling them the Law, or the *Torah*. Two centuries or so before Christ, when a translation of them had been made into Greek, another name came to be attached to them; namely, the Pentateuch. This name, which means the five-fold book, is often given to them to-day. But whatever may be the title by which we designate them, they are in popular thought, as well as in our common version of the Bible, firmly associated with the name of Moses.

And as they are thought to come from the pen of the great Hebrew lawgiver, and deal with events going back to the most ancient times—indeed, to the very creation of the world—of course it is natural that they should be regarded as the oldest of our Scripture books, and be given a place at the very beginning of the Bible. But in a preceding chapter it has been intimated that all this is a mistake. I have spoken of these books as not the productions of Moses at all, and as dating from an

age in Hebrew history many centuries after Moses' death. This claim is so contrary to the common thought, so startling in its boldness, and so revolutionary in its effects, that the ground on which it rests must be at least briefly stated. As already intimated, this view has come into general acceptance among the best biblical scholars of the world; not, however, because anybody beforehand planned that it should be so, but because the patient, reverent study of a century has brought to light, slowly but steadily, such an overwhelming array of facts, all looking in this direction, that at last the conclusions which they suggest have become irresistible. To show that I do not speak too strongly, let me quote a sentence from Prof. George T. Ladd, a ripe scholar and a careful and conservative writer, whom few will suspect of extravagance of language. In his last work on the Bible, Professor Ladd says: "With very few exceptions anywhere, and with almost no exceptions in those places where the Old Testament is studied with most freedom and breadth of learning, the whole world of scholars has abandoned the ancient tradition that the Pentateuch, in such form as we now have it, was the work of Moses."[1] Of course there is a non-progressive, backward-looking "orthodoxy" that cries out in indignation and alarm against any disturbance of the old view, and stoutly refuses to move forward. But this is to be expected. It has been the same in every advance made in the past; it will probably always be so in the future. This need not trouble us.

A few of the more important facts upon which the new view rests, very briefly stated, are the following:[2]

[1] "What is the Bible?" pp. 299–300.

[2] Pentateuchal or Hexateuchal criticism (by many scholars the Pentateuch and Joshua are classed together as one, under the name of the Hexateuch)

(1.) An Unfounded Tradition.—The idea that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch is simply a tradition, and a late one at that, having no historic basis. Prof. Robertson Smith says it is "derived from the old Jewish theory in Josephus that every leader of Israel wrote down by divine authority the events of his own time, so that the sacred history is like a day-book constantly written up to date. No part of the Bible corresponds to this description, and the Pentateuch as little as any." [1]

---

has developed an extensive literature, and has become almost a science by itself. The limits of this book permit only a brief glance at its most important points and its main conclusions. For those who wish to pursue the subject further a few valuable and easily accessible works may be mentioned. Among the most full and able of anything in English are Kuenen's "Hexateuch," translated from the Dutch, and Wellhausen's "History of Israel," from the German. Next to these, but covering wider ground, is Kuenen's "Religion of Israel." The article "Pentateuch" in the Encyclopædia Britannica (by Wellhausen) is unsurpassed among brief treatises. Professor S. R. Driver's "Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament" devotes one hundred and fifty pages to the Hexateuch, and is judicial and able. R. Heber Newton's "Book of Beginnings" is an intelligent and interesting popular treatment of the subject. Pfleiderer's "Development of Theology" (1890), Lichtenberger's "History of German Theology in the Nineteenth Century" (1889), and C. H. H. Wright's "Introduction to the Old Testament" (1890), all trace the history of Pentateuchal criticism. Benjamin W. Bacon's "Genesis of Genesis" contains excellent chapters on documentary analysis, and prints in different kinds of type the three main documents that run through Genesis, so as to enable the student to compare them. "The Polychrome Bible" adopts a somewhat similar plan but carries it still further, and represents the documents by different colors. Two valuable critical works covering the whole ground of Hexateuchal criticism are "The Documents of the Hexateuch, Translated and Arranged in Chronological Order, with Introductions and Notes," by W. E. Addis, and "The Hexateuch according to the Revised Version, arranged in its Constituent Documents, with Introductions and Notes," by J. Estlin Carpenter and G. Harford-Battersby (1900).

[1] "The Old Testament in the Jewish Church," p. 321. Of the declaration in the Talmud (*Bâba bâthra* 14), that "Moses wrote his own book, and the section concerning Balaam, and Job," Professor Driver says: "The

(2.) No Claim made by the Books Themselves to a Mosaic Authorship.—The fact that the name of Moses appears in the titles to the books in our English Bibles is not such a claim; for, as is well known by scholars, these titles are no part of the original text. Nowhere are we told that the whole Pentateuch, or that any one of its books, came from the pen of the great founder of the Hebrew nation. Certain parts and passages here and there—that is to say, certain fragments incorporated into the books when they were finally compiled—are ascribed to him. But these are all. No whole book is ascribed to him; much less all the books.[1] To be sure, in various parts of the Bible there are references to the Law of Moses, and the Book of the Law. But it is the opinion

---

entire passage is manifestly destitute of historical value. Not only is it late in date; it is discredited by the character of its contents themselves" ("Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament," p. xxix.). For an examination of the tradition of Mosaic authorship, see Bacon's "Genesis of Genesis," pp. 33–36.

[1] Dr. Heber Newton, in his "Book of the Beginnings," makes a careful study of this question, and sums it all up in the following words: "We find that a brief record of a battle in Exodus (xvii. 8–13), a memorandum of camping stations in Numbers (xxxiii. 3–49), together with the Ten Words (Ex. xxxiv. 28), and the Book of Deuteronomy, in whole or in part, constitute *all* the narrative and legislation that is *claimed* to have been written by Moses. The Pentateuch as a whole appears anonymous. This fact of itself ought to settle the case. For, if these books were really written by Moses, is it conceivable that he would have left them uncertified?" (pp. 34–35). Says Prof. Robertson Smith: "The history does not profess to be written by Moses, but only notes from time to time that he wrote down certain special things (Ex. xvii. 14, xxiv. 4, xxxiv. 27; Num. xxxiii. 2; Deut. xxxi. 9, 22, 24)" ("Old Testament in Jewish Church," p. 320). Says Professor Driver: "There is no passage of the Old Testament which ascribes the composition of the Pentateuch to Moses, or even to Moses' age" ("Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament," p. 117).

of our most learned and careful scholars that all we are justified in concluding from these is that a nucleus of that legislation found in the Pentateuch came originally from Moses, though how extended or how definite a nucleus nobody can with certainty tell. Moses was the starting point of Israel's organic history. The original law-giving which formed the beginning of Israel's distinct religious and national life came undoubtedly from him. What was so natural, therefore, as that all subsequent legislation should seek to avail itself of his authority, and to take his name, just as all psalms came to be ascribed to David, and all proverbs to Solomon?[1] But

[1] In explanation of the custom of the Hebrews of ascribing all their laws to Moses, which seems to us so strange, Prof. Robertson Smith says: "It is a familiar fact that in the early law of all nations necessary modifications on old law are habitually carried out by means of what lawyers call *legal fictions*. This name is somewhat misleading; for a legal fiction is no deceit, but a convention which all parties understand. But it is found more convenient to present the new law in a form which enables it to be treated as an integral part of the old legislation. Thus in Roman jurisprudence all law was supposed to be derived from the Laws of the Twelve Tables (Maine, 'Ancient Law,' p. 33 *seq.*), just as in Israel all law was held to be derived from the teaching of Moses. In neither case was any falsehood meant or conveyed. The whole object of this way of treating the law was to maintain the continuity of the legal system. . . . In our state of society legal fictions are out of date; in English law they have long been mere antiquarian lumber. But Israel's law was given for the practical use of an ancient people, and required to take the forms which we know as a matter of fact to be those which primitive nations best understand. . . . In India, when the government brings a new water supply into a village, the village authorities make rules for its use and distribution; but 'these rules do not purport to emanate from the personal authority of their author or authors; there is always a sort of fiction under which some customs as to the distribution of water are supposed to have existed from all antiquity, although, in fact, no artificial supply had been so much as thought of.' In the same way the new laws of the Levitical code are presented as ordinances of Moses, though, when they were first promulgated, every one knew

we are not left with merely negative evidence in the matter.

Passages which Betray a Later Hand.—Scattered all through the Pentateuch are passages which betray other and later authors than Moses. If we turn to Deuteronomy xxxiv. 5–6, we find an account given of Moses' death and burial. That can hardly have been written by Moses; men do not write histories of their own death and funeral obsequies. It has been claimed that Moses was miraculously inspired to write it beforehand. But this claim is cut off by the sentence with which the account ends, which is: "No man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day." Unto what day? Would Moses writing beforehand of his burial say that "no man knoweth of the sepulchre *unto this day*"? Nothing can be plainer than that the writer is some one living long after Moses, and that by "this day" he means his own later time. There are other passages in the Pentateuch where the same expression, "unto this day," is used, showing that they, too, were written late.

There are historical omissions in the account of the journey through the wilderness which it is incredible that the leader of that movement should have made. For example, in one place we have thirty-eight years of time dropped out as if it were nothing. Turning to Numbers (xx. 1) we read: "Then came the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, into the desert of Zin in the first month: and the people abode in Kadesh."

---

that they were not so, though Ezra himself speaks of some of them as ordinances of the prophets" ("Old Testament in the Jewish Church," pp. 385–387). Says Professor Toy: "In those days it was the custom to refer wisdom and authority to ancient sages" ("History of the Religion of Israel," p. 67).

A few verses farther on, in the same chapter (after two or three incidents that occurred at Kadesh have been mentioned), we have this record (xx. 22): "And the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, journeyed from Kadesh, and came unto Mount Hor." Nothing could be more simple or straightforward; seemingly nothing could be more closely connected. But, as a matter of fact, we are now thirty-eight years farther on. We have made a leap from the first month of the third year after the Exodus to the fifth month of the fortieth year. Thus more than a third of a century is not only left an utter blank, but is dropped out between two verses of the same chapter, with not so much as a mention of the omission; and this after a careful enumeration of the stations in the journey up to Kadesh. Would Moses have written the history of his life in that way? Would anyone have written the history of the Exodus in that way who had had a part in it?

In Numbers xii. 3 we find the statement: "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men who were upon the face of the earth." Does this look like a passage written by Moses? Do meek men write in this way about themselves?

In Genesis xxxvi. 31 appears this record: "And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, *before there reigned any king over the children of Israel.*" When was this written? Of course after there were Israelitish kings, and by some one who knew of these kings. Certainly it could not have been written in Moses' day, before such kings existed or were dreamed of. If an undated historical document were found to-day which described some event as happening "before Abraham Lincoln was President of the United States," could any-

body convince us that the document was of an earlier century? The mention of Lincoln's presidency fixes a date before which it could not have been produced. In the same way the mention of the kings over Israel fixes a date (three centuries later than Moses' day) before which the passage in Genesis could not have been written.

We read in Genesis xii. 6, in connection with the account of Abraham's entering Palestine, that "the Canaanite was then in the land." Could this passage have been written by any other than a person living *after* the Canaanite had *gone* from the land—that is to say, after Moses' day? If I find in a historical work the statement, "and the British were then in possession of New England," do I not see instantly that the work was written at some time later than the beginning of the Revolutionary War—or *after* New England was *lost* to Great Britain?

A similar chronological tell-tale is the following passage. The story (given in Numbers xv. 32) of the man who picked up sticks on the Sabbath, begins with the words: "And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness." Of course such a record could have been written only after the wilderness days were *past*. I will cite only a single other passage. In Deuteronomy xxxiv. 10 we read: "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses." It need hardly be asked whether this can be regarded as of Mosaic authorship.

These are only a few of the large number of passages found in all the Pentateuchal books which betray a hand later than that of Moses. But the great proof, rising in magnitude and importance above all others, that the books ascribed to Moses are not from him, is found in

the evidences which have been accumulating for a century, as biblical scholarship has improved and deepened, showing that the Pentateuch is a compilation, or, rather, a series of compilations, of late date, made up of documents of different ages, which scholars are able to separate from each other, and to trace in and out, as warp and woof, through the various books.

Scholars have always been puzzled over much that they found in the Pentateuch. Jerome, the one great biblical scholar of the early Church, was. Several of the most learned of the Protestant reformers of the sixteenth century were. Many Jewish scholars of different ages have been. Later Christian scholars have been more and more.

The idea of the work being composite—a compilation from earlier documents which might be separated from each other—was first suggested by Astruc, a distinguished professor of medicine in Paris, in 1753. This has proved the key to the puzzle.

The elements in the Pentateuch which have been so troublesome, and out of which the discovery of its composite character has come, are (in part) the following:

1. Duplicate and even triplicate accounts of the same events, with no apparent reason for the repetitions. These are of frequent occurrence.

2. Contradictions and historical discrepancies of various kinds.

3. Abrupt transitions and breaks in the narrative—very noticeable in the English, but still more so in the original Hebrew.

4. Sudden changes of style, as if different men were speaking, but with no intimation of the departure of one and the coming forward of another.

5. An unaccountable use of different names for God in the Hebrew text—here for a series of verses, or even chapters, the name *Elohim* being exclusively used, and then the name *Jahveh* (*Jehovah*);[1] and then, without any warning, another change back to *Elohim*, and so on.

6. Legislation evidently intended for an early and crude age, strangely mixed in with legislation as plainly intended for a more advanced and enlightened age.

7. Religious and ethical teachings hardly above the level of barbarism, and views of God plainly polytheistic, and even fetichistic, standing side by side with ethical and religious teachings and views of God of the loftiest and purest character.

8. A strange mixing of older Hebrew idioms and language with later Hebrew, and especially the extended anachronism of the use on a large scale of Hebrew of the fifth century B.C. in records of laws and events purporting to date from the fourteenth or fifteenth.

All these difficulties, so puzzling, so wholly insoluble on the old theory of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, are easily explained by the new view. They are exactly what would be certain to appear in a work produced as we now know the Pentateuch was produced.

---

[1] The spelling "Jehovah" is incorrect. The real name is probably Jahveh or Yahweh. (See Appendix, by Russell Martineau, at the end of Ewald's "History of Israel," vol. ii.). The true spelling became lost as the result of long writing it by mere consonant outlines (ancient Hebrew writing was all by consonant outlines), and thus forgetting in process of time what vowels were to be supplied. Leading Old Testament scholars are generally adopting the spelling Jahveh or Yahweh. See "Names," ¶ 109, in the "Encyclopædia Biblica."

BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT CLASSIFIED

BOOKS OF

In the Order of the Hebrew Bible.	In the Order of Septuagint (including the O. T. Apocrypha).
I. *The Law* (5 Books).	*The Pentateuch.*
Genesis.	Genesis.
Exodus.	Exodus.
Leviticus.	Leviticus.
Numbers.	Numbers.
Deuteronomy.	Deuteronomy.
II. *The Prophets* (8 Books)	Joshua.
(The Former Prophets).	Judges.
Joshua.	Ruth.
Judges.	4 Books of Kings (
Samuel (as one Book).	and 2 Sam. and 1 a
Kings (as one Book).	Kings).
(The Latter Prophets).	Chronicles (as one Bo
Isaiah.	1 Esdras (= Ezra & N
Jeremiah.	2 Esdras.
Ezekiel.	Tobit.
(The Twelve Minor Prophets	Judith.
counted as one Book).	Esther.
Hosea.	Job.
Joel.	Psalms.
Amos.	Proverbs.
Obadiah.	Ecclesiastes.
Jonah.	Canticles.
Micah.	Wisdom of Solomon.
Nahum.	Ecclesiasticus.
Habakkuk.	The Twelve Minor
Zephaniah.	phets (in a diff
Haggai.	order).
Zechariah.	Isaiah.
Malachi.	Jeremiah.
III. *The Writings* (11 Books).	Baruch.
Psalms.	Lamentations.
Proverbs.	The Epistle of Jerem
Job.	Ezekiel.
(The Five Rolls).	Daniel.
Song of Songs.	Three Books of M
Ruth	bees.
Lamentations.	The Prayer of Mana
Ecclesiastes.	
Esther.	
Daniel.	
Ezra-Nehemiah (as one Book).	
Chronicles (as one Book).	

LD TESTAMENT.

In their (Approximately) true order, According to the Higher Criticism.

(See Table of "Dates of Biblical Literature" between pp. 58 and 59.)

Amos.
Hosea.
Isaiah.
Micah.
Deuteronomy.
Nahum.
Zephaniah.
Jeremiah.
Habakkuk.
Ezekiel.
Obadiah.
Lamentations.
Second Isaiah.
Zechariah.
Haggai.
Judges.
1 and 2 Samuel.
1 and 2 Kings.
Joshua.
Job.
Ruth.
Malachi.
Jonah.
Joel.
Genesis.
Exodus.
Leviticus.
Numbers.
Song of Solomon.
Ezra.
Nehemiah.
1 and 2 Chronicles
Ecclesiastes.
Esther.
Proverbs (final collection).
Daniel.
Psalms (final collection).

Classified According to their Nature and Literary Form (Including the most Important Apocryphal Books).

I. *Ancestral Traditions and Laws* (5 Books).
Genesis.
Exodus.
Leviticus.
Numbers.
Deuteronomy.

II. *History* (11 Books).
Joshua.
Judges.
1 and 2 Samuel.
1 and 2 Kings.
1 and 2 Chronicles.
Ezra.
Nehemiah.
1 Maccabees.

III *Prophecy* (14 Books).
Isaiah.
Jeremiah.
Ezekiel.
Eleven of the Minor Prophets (all except Daniel).

IV. *Poetry* (4 Books).
Job.
Psalms.
Lamentations.
Song of Solomon.

V. "*Wisdom Literature*" (4 Books).
Proverbs.
Ecclesiastes.
Wisdom of Solomon.
Ecclesiasticus.

VI. *Romance* (5 Books).
Ruth.
Jonah.
Esther.
Tobit.
Judith.

VII. *Apocalypse* (2 Books).
Daniel.
Enoch (Pseudepigrapha).

CHAPTER VI.

THE PENTATEUCH: ITS COMPOSITE CHARACTER AND REAL ORIGIN.

MUCH is now settled regarding the Pentateuch, but not everything. What is settled? At least the following important points:

1. That the work is composite.

2. That it is made up in large part of different "documents."

3. That these documents are traceable throughout almost the entire Pentateuch.

4. That those most easily traced and of prime importance are four in number.

5. That Deuteronomy was written earlier (not later, as has been generally supposed) than any other of the five books as we have them.

6. That the Pentateuchal legislation, at least in the elaborate form in which it comes to us, was the last written part of the Pentateuch.[1]

The principal discussion now is over the dates of the four documents. What are these documents?

There is hardly an original investigator of eminence who does not think that he finds traces of others besides the four; some claim to discover as many as eight or ten additional ones. But about these there is no agreement,

[1] To all these points even so conservative scholars as Delitzsch and Dillmann assent.

except that, whatever they may be, they are relatively unimportant. All agree that the four are pre-eminent.[1]

To these four, different names are given by different scholars. I choose the following as perhaps favored by the latest and best authorities; namely, the *Jahvistic* (or *Jehovistic*), the *Elohistic*, the *Deuteronomic*, and the *Priestly* documents, commonly designated respectively by the letters "*J*," "*E*," "*D*," and "*P*." A few words about each must suffice.

1. The *Jahvistic* (or *Jehovistic*) document ("*J*") takes its name from the fact that in certain parts of it the Deity is called almost exclusively by the name *Jahveh* (*Yahweh*), or *Jehovah*. It has much in common with the Elohistic document, "*E*" — *so* much, indeed, that some scholars of eminence do not try to separate them. It is better, however, to recognize the two as distinct, only bearing in mind their striking similarities, and remembering that the great contrasts that exist are between these two and the Deuteronomic and Priestly documents, particularly the latter. The Jahvistic document is made up almost wholly of narratives. It is full of persons and of movement. Its style is graphic. It excels in delineating life and character. It is the most *interesting* portion of

[1] Says Prof. C. A. Briggs: "There are no Hebrew professors on the continent of Europe, so far as I know, who would deny the literary analysis of the Pentateuch into the four great documents. The professors of Hebrew in the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, and Edinburgh, and tutors in a large number of theological colleges, hold to the same opinion. A very considerable number of the Hebrew professors of America are in accord with them. There are, indeed, a few professional scholars who hold to the traditional opinion, but these are in a hopeless minority. I doubt whether there is any question of scholarship whatever in which there is greater agreement among scholars than in this question of the literary analysis of the Hexateuch" (*Presbyterian Review*, April, 1887, p. 340).

the Pentateuch. It contains much ethical religious teaching, but it is generally natural, simple, connected with life, not dogmatic. It lingers fondly over sacred places. The more extremely anthropomorphic representations of God found in the Pentateuch are generally in this document; as, for example, his walking in the garden at the cool of the day;[1] his coming down to see the tower built by men, and confounding their speech;[2] his meeting Moses in an inn and seeking to slay him;[3] his swearing,[4] and repenting,[5] and getting angry.[6] The document is decidedly "prophetical" in character as distinguished from "priestly." As to its date, there is some difference of judgment. It used to be placed later than that of the Elohistic, but Kuenen and Wellhausen place it earlier, and the tendency now is in that direction. The time generally fixed for it is the century between 850 and 800 B.C.,[7] and there is a growing disposition to make the writer a prophet of the southern kingdom of Judah.

2. The *Elohistic* document ("*E*") derives its name from the Hebrew word *Elohim*, which in some of its parts is generally used for God. This document also, as well as the Jahvistic, is made up largely of narratives.[8] It is clearly prophetical in its character, though, perhaps, not as pre-eminently so as the other. Its style is vivid; it is full of life and interest; it is perhaps even more

[1] Gen. iii. 8. [2] Gen. xi. 7. [3] Ex. iv. 24.
[4] Gen. xxiv. 7. [5] Gen. vi. 6. [6] Ex. iv. 14.

[7] Reuss, H. Schultz, Dillmann, Kittel, Riehm, Stade, Wellhausen, Kuenen, and many other critics of first rank agree upon this date.

[8] Not wholly, however. The legislative element (found mainly in the Priestly Code) is not entirely wanting in the Jahvistic and Elohistic documents. Indeed, the *very earliest* legislation of the Pentateuch is *all* found in these. See Ex. xx., xxi.–xxiii., xxxiv.

objective than the Jahvistic narrative. The two together might well be called the story-book of the Pentateuch. Nearly every one of the Genesis and Exodus stories which children love are found in one or the other of these two documents. The Elohist writer gives special prominence to places and men of northern Palestine, and hence is generally believed to have been a native of the Northern Kingdom. The date of his narrative may be set down as about 800–750 B.C.[1]

3. The third document is essentially the Book of *Deuteronomy*, and is designated among critics as "*D.*" It differs from the other documents in being found in the Pentateuch all in one place, and entire, while the others have been broken up by later editors and compilers, and interwoven with other matter throughout the several books.

The date of Deuteronomy is probably between 650 and 621 B.C.[2] It is undoubtedly the book which Hilkiah the priest is reported to have found in the Temple when that edifice was being repaired, and which, being brought to King Josiah and read to him, stirred him up to make that great religious reform described in 2 Kings xxii.–

---

[1] Dillmann, Kittel, and Riehm say 900–850 B.C.; Wellhausen, Kuenen, and Stade say about 750 B.C.

[2] Says Professor Driver: "Even though it were clear that the first four books of the Pentateuch were written by Moses, it would be difficult to sustain the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy. For, to say nothing of the remarkable difference of style, Deuteronomy conflicts with the *legislation* of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers in a manner that would not be credible were the legislator in both one and the same" ("Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament," p. 77). The composition of Deuteronomy is placed by Ewald, Kittel, Robertson Smith, and Driver in the reign of Manasseh (697–642), and by Reuss, Kuenen, Wellhausen, and Toy in that of Josiah (639–609).

xxiii., which resulted in so nearly extirpating idolatry from Judah. Thus the book clearly marks an epoch in the history of the religion of Israel.

It is plain that the author makes use of older material in his writing,[1] and yet his production is to be classed distinctly as an original composition rather than as a compilation. The main body of the work shows a single mind; but the opening and the concluding portions are probably later additions. Though the author is unknown, his book shows that he was a man of a religious and progressive spirit, who was warmly in sympathy with the prophets of the eighth century and their work of religious reform. He writes with skill and power, often rising into eloquence. His ethical and religious teachings are among the noblest in the Old Testament. The book is particularly interesting from the fact that it stands at the beginning of the movement which culminated in the Pentateuchal legislation. While much more prophetic than priestly in spirit, it nevertheless seems to have given the initiative to that sacerdotal movement in Israel which concentrated the national worship in Jerusalem, raised the priests to unwonted power, turned the eyes of the people to the past for revelations of God, and ended in the fully elaborated Levitical Law.

4. The *Priestly* document ("*P*"), made up of what is known as the Priestly Code, together with its historical settings and various elaborations, is the largest and most important of the documents, as it is undoubtedly the

[1] We have seen that the Jahvistic and Elohistic documents were in existence a century and a half or two centuries before this time. It is also probable that by about 800 or 750 B.C. a simple collection of civil and religious laws had been made. There are indications that the Deuteronomist drew from each of these sources.

latest in date.[1] The great mass of this document consists of the Levitical or ritual law, which is represented as having been given at Sinai. All else in the document is subordinate to this. But this could not stand alone; it must be properly introduced; it must have its historical framework. Hence the document begins with a brief outline history of the world, or, rather, of the ancestors of the Hebrew people from Adam to Moses. It is here that we have those long genealogical tables of the Pentateuch, which alike weary the reader and puzzle the chronologist and historian. Into this introductory history we have brought, at important epochs, certain special laws or "covenants," as the Sabbath (at creation), the Noachic law of bloodshed (Gen. ix.), circumcision (Gen. xvii.), the Passover (Ex. xii.)—all looking in the general direction of the *great* law and covenant to be revealed at Sinai as the consummation of all. The introductory portion over, then comes the long Sinaitic legislation, occupying the last half of the Book of Exodus, the whole of Leviticus, and most of Numbers; and finally, to complete the whole, we have an account of the supposed distribution of the land of Canaan by lot among the various tribes of Israel, and the conquest of the land, running through the latter part of Numbers and the Book of Joshua.[2]

---

[1] Professor Driver pronounces it "the latest of the sources of which the Hexateuch is composed," belonging "approximately to the period of the Babylonian captivity" ("Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament," p. 129).

[2] The Book of Joshua is organically connected with the Pentateuch. The three chief documents of the Pentateuch, "*J*," "*E*," and "*P*," run right on through Joshua, for which reason there is a growing tendency among scholars to class the first *six* books of the Old Testament together under the name of the "*Hexateuch*."

This elaborate and long-drawn-out Priestly document (code and narrative) is mechanical and dry in the extreme. There is no poetry in it, and no life. It is verbose, artificial, repetitious, tedious—particularly the code part. The historical portion draws constantly upon the "*J*" and "*E*" documents for data; but it so works over its narratives as to destroy all picturesqueness, all naturalness, all human interest. From first to last it is intent upon one thing; namely, the working out of a divine purpose in Israel's history, and that divine purpose the establishment of the Jewish theocracy according to the pattern revealed at Sinai. When and where did this Priestly document originate? It was undoubtedly a growth. There are plain evidences that many hands and brains and hearts labored at the task of producing it—some directly, others indirectly. The impulse in a new direction given to Israel's religious development by the Deuteronomist was not suffered to die nor to stop where he left it. In a generation came the exile to Babylon. This was favorable to the priestly influence. The priests were already in possession of many oral traditions (aiming at the regulation of civil and religious life and private and public worship) which they looked upon as sacred. It was only a question of time when these would be embodied in written form. Already there were many germs of ritual in existence. The priests would be sure to make the most of these. Moreover, there was real need for a better organized worship, one that should more adequately express the unifying faith and the deepening religious life of the people; and the new movement in its motive and aim really meant this.

Babylon was undoubtedly the place where the new Priestly document was formed—mainly, if not wholly.

The priest-prophet Ezekiel may have had nothing to do with it directly; but his glowing vision of a restored Temple in Jerusalem, with its more elaborate worship, its improved Torah or Law, and its new glories, which was published about the fourteenth year of the Exile (572 B.C.), is strongly suggestive of the Priestly code, and must have been influential in preparing the way for its coming. The whole Priestly document (both the code and its historical setting) was probably the work of a school of literary priests (forerunners of the later scribes) that sprung up in Babylon soon after Ezekiel. How long it took them to perform their task we cannot tell. The most we know is that it was undoubtedly completed by the time of Ezra, the Babylonian priest and scribe who came to Jerusalem from Babylon at the head of a large company of zealous Jews, and in the year 444 introduced to the people there, at a great gathering called for the purpose, a new "Book of the Law," called the "Law of God," and the "Law of Moses," which was publicly read to the people day after day, and which Ezra bound them all with a solemn covenant to obey. This Book of the Law, thus for the first time publicly made known to the Jews, was doubtless the Priestly document.[1]

The Four Documents United.—So much for the origin and character of the different documents that made up the Pentateuch. It remains now to add a word

---

[1] For a full presentation of reasons for the assignment of the Priestly document to the time of the Exile or later, see Wellhausen's "History of Israel," chaps. i.–v. and viii. For a briefer treatment, see article "Pentateuch" in Encyclopædia Britannica (by Wellhausen); also see Prof. Robertson Smith's "Old Testament in the Jewish Church," chap. xii.

For a careful study of all four of the documents, see Professor Driver's "Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament," pp. 109–150.

as to how and when they were combined into the form in which they come down to us.

It is believed that the two earliest documents, the *Jahvistic* and the *Elohistic*, circulated for a considerable time (perhaps from one to two centuries) separately, meanwhile passing through certain modifications. Then they seem to have been united into one, not far from the time of the origin of *Deuteronomy* (621 B.C.). A little later, perhaps within a generation or two, this united document and *Deuteronomy*[1] seem to have been joined and put in circulation as "a well-rounded prophetic compilation." This takes us down to the beginning of the Exile, soon after which the codification of the Levitical ritual begins.

During the exile and the century immediately following it, the *Priestly* document (the full Levitical Code and its historical setting) are formed by stages which can be only dimly traced; but by the year 444 it is completed and given to the people by Ezra as the new Book of the Law.[2]

There remains now only one other thing to do to complete the Pentateuch. That one thing is to combine this new Book of the Law—the *Priestly document*—with the older united *prophetic* compilation made up of the documents "*J*," "*E*," and "*D*." The hand that does this is very possibly Ezra's; if not, it is one that follows soon afterward. When this is done, and a little subsequent editing has been added, the Pentateuch has reached essentially the form in which it comes down to us.

We thus see that the Pentateuch may almost be called

[1] Deuteronomy had in the meantime received an introduction and an appendix.

[2] Neh. viii.–x.

an epitome of the religion of ancient Israel. Moses did not write it. Like so much else of the Old Testament and the New, its authorship is unknown. Indeed, its structure is so composite, and it came into being so slowly, so gradually, through so many changes, and as the result of so many hands and so diverse influences, that we can hardly, with any propriety, speak of authorship, in our modern sense, in connection with it.

Dates of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.—We may say with some assurance that the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers assumed their present form from four and a half to four centuries, and Deuteronomy about six centuries, before Christ. But this, of itself, means little; indeed, it is liable to mislead. For it must be remembered that all the books draw from sources older, often many centuries older, than themselves. The traditions of the Hebrew people from the very earliest times—times far earlier than Moses—are gathered here: idyllic tales of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; accounts of the creation and of the first fortunes of the human race, possibly learned from the Babylonians during the Exile; stories—one quarter historic and three quarters legendary—of the wonderful wilderness journey from bondage in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land. Mingled with these are several brief early collections of laws of great historical importance, as the "Ten Words" (Ex. xx.), the "Book of the Covenant" (Ex. xx.–xxiii.), and the "Little Book of the Covenant" (Ex. xxxiv.), besides a great deal of later legislation and other matter showing the religious development of Israel for many hundreds of years. Many different men, working in different places and ages, had part in writing all this out and gathering it together;

and as Moses was looked upon as the great Lawgiver, it was all ascribed to him. Well may Professor Toy say of the Pentateuch: "It is the Israelitish Thesaurus, or Treasury of Traditions and Laws. Each narrative or collection of laws bears the impress of the age in which it originated; the whole is a panorama of the religion of Israel."[1]

[1] "History of the Religion of Israel," pp. 91–92.

CHAPTER VII.

HEBREW LEGEND AND HISTORY: ORIGIN OF THE OLD TESTAMENT HISTORICAL BOOKS.

BECAUSE the Pentateuch contains historical elements, it is sometimes classed with the historical books of the Bible. I have seen fit, however, to treat it by itself, partly because it has a distinct unity of its own, partly because even more important than its history is the legislative or legal element which it contains, and partly because its study involves questions the most difficult and crucial of any connected with Old Testament criticism, and which, therefore, require more space for their treatment than it will be necessary to give to the other historical books, or, indeed, to any of the remaining books of the Old Testament. As has already been intimated, we shall find that what we have discovered as to the composite character of the Pentateuch and the late origin of the priestly legislation, is a key that will go far toward opening up the significance of all the rest of the volume.

A Legendary Background to all Early History.— The history of all ancient peoples extends back until it merges into a shadowy realm of tradition, legend, and myth. We know how true this is of the early history of Greece and Rome. Says Grote, in the preface to his "History of Greece": "I describe the earlier times by themselves, as conceived by the faith and feeling of the first Greeks, and known only through their legends, with-

out presuming to measure how much or how little of historical matter these legends may contain. If the reader blame me for not assisting him to determine this —if he ask me why I do not undraw the curtain and disclose the picture—I reply in the words of the painter Zeuxis, when the same question was addressed to him on exhibiting his masterpiece of imitative art: 'The curtain *is* the picture.' What we now read as poetry and legend was once accredited history, and the only genuine history which the first Greeks could conceive or relish of their past time."

This illustrates well the early condition, not simply of the Greeks, but also of nearly all other ancient peoples, the Hebrews included. It is only a little while since the vast background of "shadowy times and persons" of early Greek legend and myth was supposed to be, in large part at least, real history. So, too, it is only since Niebuhr that the legends of early Rome have been detached from Roman history. A hundred years ago the stories of Romulus and Remus, the elder Brutus, the Tarquins, the Horatius who

> "kept the bridge
> In the brave days of old,"

were all supposed to be reliable narratives of real persons and events. But now no respectable historian thinks of treating them as anything else but legends.

The same change in the method of treating early Hebrew history is rapidly making its appearance. The best writers are more and more distinguishing between the earlier period of legend (and perhaps also myth), and the later period of real history.

"It is most clearly evident," says Kuenen, "that the

Old Testament narratives of Israel's earliest fortunes are entirely upon a par with the accounts which *other* nations have handed down to us concerning *their* early history. That is to say, their principal element is *legend.* The remembrance of the great men and of the important events of antiquity was preserved by posterity. Transmitted from mouth to mouth, it gradually lost its accuracy and precision, and adopted all sorts of foreign elements. The principal characteristics which legend shows among other ancient nations are found also among the Israelites."[1]

How far back can we find Reliable History among the Hebrews?—Kuenen claims that the historical period among the Hebrew people cannot be carried back with any certainty beyond the eighth, or, at most, the ninth, century B.C. Not but that there is much true history earlier, but by that time we are at the end of any definite authentic records. Now we launch out upon tradition; or, if we find other records, they are scrappy, and come to us without credentials. Professor Toy thinks we have reliable Bible narratives that go back to 1000 or 1200 B.C.

Elijah, Elisha, Solomon, and David are historical characters.[2] Much that comes to us concerning them stands all our tests of investigation. Yet much also does not. A legendary element is apparent in our accounts of them. The same is true of Saul and Samuel, as well as of most or all of the Judges—Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson, and the rest; though the story of Samson is so full of legend and myth that it is pretty hard to find any history in it. Moses is historic; Joshua may be; but there is a

[1] "Religion of Israel," vol. i., p. 22.

[2] Elijah began his public work about 870 B.C. Solomon became king about 973, and David about 1010 B.C.

very large legendary element in the accounts that come to us of the Conquest and the Exodus.[1] Scholars succeed in separating, to some extent, between the legend and the history, but after they have exhausted all their critical resources there is much remaining in doubt.

Earlier than the Exodus all is shadow; in the twilight we catch glimpses of what are doubtless historic characters and real events, but, strain our eyes much as we will, we can make out little that is certain.[2]

However, let us not conclude that because what comes to us from the earlier ages of Israel's existence is so largely legendary, it is therefore valueless. No conclusion could be less warranted. True, it has little value as history; but history is not the only valuable form of literature. In the poetry of a people, in the ballads and songs of a people, in the legends and traditions of a people, we often have a more precious legacy even than in its chronicles. The poems of Homer reveal to us the Greek people of his time—their hopes and fears, loves and hates, joys and sorrows, aspirations, yearnings, worship—the whole world, indeed, of their deepest thoughts and feelings, as no mere historic narrative of facts could do. The same is true of the legends of the Old Testament. They are the products and the survivals of what was deepest and most sacred in the thoughts, feelings, beliefs, worships of those important early ages when the Hebrew

[1] The true date of the Exodus from Egypt under Moses is probably about 1300. Then follows the conquest of Canaan, a slow process lasting at least one or two centuries, perhaps more. In the margin of our common English Bibles the dates of these events are erroneously given as 1491 and 1451-1427.

[2] See Kuenen's "Religion of Israel," vol. i., chap. ii.; "Bible for Learners," vol. i.; particularly chap. xi.; Heilprin's "Historical Poetry of the Ancient Hebrews," vol. i., pp. 11-17 *seq.*; H. P. Smith's "Old Testament History," chaps. i–iv.; Kent's "Heroes and Crises of Early Hebrew History."

people were laying the foundations of their national life, and building up within themselves that strength and quality of moral fibre which was later to revolutionize the religion of the world.[1]

Bible History subject to the same Canons of Criticism as other History.—The theory is widely held that the history found in the Bible is radically different from all other history—that it arose under wholly different conditions, that it is to be measured by different standards, and, above all, that it claims and possesses a freedom from error elsewhere unknown. But scholarship gives no support to this theory. Says the conservative Professor Ladd upon this subject: "We have no claim to historic infallibility set up in the Bible, or even to unusual freedom from errors of an historical kind. Neither does it appear that God has ever revealed to men the exact character and order of past events where no record of the events themselves has been kept. For their facts the sacred authors of the biblical histories appear always to have been dependent upon the ordinary resources. Some things of their own time they witnessed for themselves, or learned from others who had witnessed them;

---

[1] For a collection of legends of Old Testament characters, gathered from sources outside the Bible, see Baring-Gould's "Book of Old Testament Legends." For Greek legends, see Grote's "History of Greece," vol. i. For a graphic account of the process by which legends have their birth, see Macaulay's Introduction to his "Lays of Ancient Rome." For a discussion of the mythical element in the Bible, see Goldziher's "Hebrew Mythology"; also chapter on "The Mythical Element in the New Testament," in Dr. Hedge's "Ways of the Spirit." On the general subject of myths as connected with religion, see Clodd's "Childhood of Religion"; Müller's "Chips from a German Workshop," vol. ii.; Tyler's "Primitive Culture," vol. i.; Fiske's "Myths and Myth-makers"; Lang's "Myth, Ritual, and Religion"; Cox's and other works on mythology.

other things they accepted as currently reported. There were traditions, oral and written, which claimed to give an account of what had taken place in the more remote past. The later writers had for use the documents and books composed by the earlier ones. The biblical historians possessed, in brief, just such kinds of sources of information with respect to previous events, as ancient historians generally possessed." [1]

To sum up, then: The verdict of unbiassed scholarship regarding the historical portion of the Old Testament is that it contains a great deal of reliable and valuable history—indeed, that among the historical works coming down to us from the ancient world, few are, on the whole, so trustworthy as the Bible; but, at the same time, that it contains, under the name of history, much that is only tradition and legend, and not infrequently it makes mistakes as to fact; so that, to ascertain what in its pages is really reliable history and what is not, we are compelled to resort to precisely the same methods of critical research and verification which we apply to all other books.

The Old Testament Historical Books.—With so much of introduction, let us proceed to make brief inquiry regarding the date and authorship of the several Old Testament historical books, in the order in which they stand in our canon.

Aside from the Pentateuch they are twelve in number. Classing them according to their contents, they fall into two series, the first series being made up of the first seven books—Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings; and the second series being composed of

[1] "What is the Bible?" p. 227.

the last five books—1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. The first series connects closely with the Pentateuch, taking up the thread of Israel's history where Numbers and Deuteronomy lay it down, and bringing it straight on down to the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, and the carrying away of the people captive to Babylon—thus, taken with the Pentateuch, forming a continuous history of the world, or, rather, of that part of the world represented by the Israelites and their ancestors, from the Creation to the Exile. The second series also begins its narrative with Adam, bridges rapidly the long space from Adam to David with a series of genealogical tables, and then continues the history, with some fullness, but with a very decided bias in favor of the priestly class, on down to a hundred years after the close of the Exile—that is, to the second visit of Nehemiah to Jerusalem in the year 432 B.C. Thus we have the whole period of Israel's history covered, as far as the Exile, twice over, by these twelve historical books.

The Book of Joshua.—The sixth book of the Bible, and the first after the Pentateuch, gives evidence, as has been already said, of a close organic connection with the preceding five books. The three Pentateuchal documents, "*J*," "*E*," and "*P*," are plainly traceable through it. It also shows marks of a revision by an editor who does his work in the spirit of Deuteronomy. It is the last book of the Hexateuch. It narrates the crossing of the Jordan by the Israelites, their conquest of Palestine west of the Jordan, the allotment of the country among the tribes, and the closing events in the life of Joshua. Its narratives have to be taken with much allowance, for it is certain, from numerous evidences which appear later,

that Palestine was not conquered by the Israelites at so early a day in any such thorough manner as is here described. In this connection it is gratifying to find reason to believe that the terrible slaughters of women and helpless children described in this book are largely fictions. The book is a late production, based on earlier traditions. It was composed about the same time with Exodus and Numbers, after the Exile, perhaps between 450 and 400 B.C.

The Book of Judges.—This book takes its name from the local heroes (twelve or thirteen in number) whose exploits form its main subject. It purports to take up the history of Israel where the Book of Joshua leaves it, carrying it on for four hundred and ten years. But it is probable that some of its earlier narratives are really duplicates of some in Joshua;[1] and it is certain that its time limit must be shortened, perhaps to about two hundred years. The period it covers is one of great rudeness; civilization as yet is very imperfect, government is unsettled, civil wars abound, morals are low; there is much violence and cruelty; ephods and images and the gods of the Canaanites are worshiped by the Israelitish people side by side with Jahveh, their own national deity. The narratives of the book give a graphic picture of society in this early period, but they are much mixed with legend. Probably the main stories were gathered into a single collection near the middle of the seventh century. But, if so, the collection, or book, was revised and important additions made to it quite in the prophetic spirit of Deuteronomy, during or very soon after the Babylonian Exile.

[1] Compare Judg. i. 21 with Josh. xv. 63; Judg. i. 10–15 with Josh. xv. 14–19; Judg. i. 27–28 with Josh. xvii. 12–13; Judg. i. 29 with Josh. xvi. 10.

The Book of Ruth does not follow Judges in the Hebrew canon, but stands far over toward the latter part of the Old Testament, after Psalms, Proverbs, and Job. The only reason for placing it here seems to be that it portrays a state of society such as that which we have seen to have existed at the close of the Book of Judges. It is a most charming idyl of domestic life, and forms a pleasing contrast with the darker pictures of the preceding book. It was probably written about 430, as a protest against the stern legalism of Ezra.[1]

The Books of 1 and 2 Samuel were originally a single book. The prophet Samuel is the most prominent figure in the earlier part, hence the books are called by his name. They take the history of Israel on through the events that lead up to the monarchy, through the reign of Saul, and nearly through that of David. Several long sections give evidence of having been written by a single hand,[2] but most of the books is a compilation. In some parts the narrative is formed of two separate narratives woven together, which sometimes conflict, and even flatly contradict each other.[3] The books are probably the work of a prophet writing during the period of the Babylonian Exile, but with a few later additions.

The Books of 1 and 2 Kings, like the two Books of Samuel, formed originally one book. They trace the history of the Israelitish people from David's nomination of Solomon to be his successor, through the reign of Solomon, the division of the kingdom, the varying fortunes of the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah, to the

---

[1] Driver thinks before the Exile ; Ewald, Bertheau, Kuenen, Wellhausen, and Toy think during or after.

[2] The most extended are 1 Sam. xv. to 2 Sam. v., and 2 Sam. ix.–xx.

[3] Compare 1 Sam. xvi. 17–23 with xvii. 1–18, 55–58.

beginning of the captivity in Babylon. These books differ from all of the preceding historical books in the fact that they refer repeatedly to other authorities for additional information upon points under treatment. These authorities are, (1) for the reign of Solomon, the "Book of the Acts of Solomon"; (2) for the kingdom of Israel, the "Books of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel" (referred to seventeen times); (3) for the kingdom of Judah, the "Book of Chronicles of the Kings of Judah" (referred to fifteen times). Again and again we read, "And the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the Book of the Acts of Solomon?"; "And the rest of the acts of Ahaz which he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah?" etc., etc. The books thus referred to are lost. They were probably official records of some kind, or works based upon such official records. The compiler of the Books of Kings is not known. He writes in the spirit of Deuteronomy, by which work he has almost certainly been influenced. Wellhausen and Kuenen think his work was substantially completed before the Exile (making its date therefore between 620 and 600 B.C.); but there is a growing consensus of judgment that this is too early by half a century.

The Books of 1 and 2 Chronicles were also originally a single book. As previously stated, they form the beginning of the second great group of Old Testament histories—the other three books of the group being Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. Indeed, it is plain from many unmistakable indications that these five books really form a single, continuous work.

The Books of Chronicles begin their narrative with

Adam and end with the captivity in Babylon. Thus they cover ground which has already been covered, particularly duplicating (with changes and in a different spirit) much that is found in Samuel and Kings. One naturally wonders what is the need of these Books of Chronicles, when in so many ways they run parallel to what has been written before. The explanation is, they were written late, and in the interest of the hierarchy, the temple ritual, the Levitical legislation—to give these standing and a historic environment.

They take the old history of the nation, add to it and subtract from it, and in various ways remold it, with the constant aim of exalting the priests, the Law, and the temple-worship. It is speaking moderately to say that they are much less reliable as history than Samuel or Kings.[1]

As to the date of these books, I cannot do better than to quote the words of Professor Driver: "They contain many indications of being the compilation of an author living long subsequently to the age of Ezra and Nehemiah—in fact, not before the close of the Persian rule. A date shortly after 332 B.C. is thus the earliest to which the composition of the Chronicles can be plausibly

[1] Says Professor Toy: "The difference between the Books of Kings and Chronicles is this: Kings (which is a continuation of Judges and Samuel) was written by a prophet during the Babylonian Exile; it gives the history of both the southern kingdom of Judah and the northern kingdom of Israel, and its object is to show that the nation's prosperity was in proportion to its obedience to Jahveh. Chronicles was written by a priest or a Levite more than two hundred years later; it gives the history of Judah only, and its object is to show that the nation's prosperity was in proportion to its observance of the temple-service. Much that Chronicles says of the temple-service is not reliable" ("History of the Religion of Israel," pp. 39-40).

assigned, and it is that which is adopted by most modern critics." [1]

The Book of Ezra is united in the Jewish canon with Nehemiah. It takes up the thread of Jewish history at the return of the exiles from Babylon under Zerubbabel, 536 B.C., and carries it forward intermittently for a hundred years. The book naturally divides into two parts. The first part tells the story of the rebuilding of the temple, and the second part that of the effort made by Ezra to get the Jews who had married foreign wives to divorce them. It seems to contain certain "memoirs" from the pen of Ezra, but the book as a whole is a compilation made long after Ezra's age, and seemingly by the same man who compiled Chronicles and Nehemiah. The book is written partly in Hebrew and partly in Aramaic—the language (closely related to the Hebrew) spoken by the Jewish people after their return from the Exile.

The Book of Nehemiah is simply a continuation of Ezra. It relates two important events—the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, and the presentation to the people by Ezra of the new Book of the Law, which was undoubtedly the Levitical legislation essentially as we have it in the Pentateuchal books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. This latter event marks an epoch in the history of Israel. When the people of Jerusalem listened to the reading of this new book by Ezra, and bound themselves by a solemn covenant to accept and obey it, the old simple religion of the prophets was dead, and the new Jewish Church, with its elaborate ceremonial, its priestly hierarchy, its sacrificial system, and its temple

[1] "Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament," p. 486. Ewald, Bertheau, Schrader, Dillmann, Ball, Oettli, Kuenen, and Toy fix the date as late as this; Nöldeke puts it a hundred years later still (about 200 B.C.).

ritual, was born. The literature springing immediately out of the great change, giving it its historical setting and justification, was Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah.

The Book of Esther is rather a historical romance than a history. It tells how Esther, a beautiful Jewess, living in Susa, the Persian capital, rose to be the queen of King Ahasuerus (Xerxes), and saved her countrymen from a terrible plot which had been laid for their destruction by the king's favorite courtier, Haman. The object of the story is to give an account of the Jewish Feast of Purim, which is still celebrated the 14th and 15th of the month Adar, the date of the supposed deliverance.[1] The book is morally and religiously of a low order. It has often been pointed out that it does not contain the name of God; but, worse than that, its spirit throughout is narrow, secular, revengeful. Ewald says that in passing to Esther from the other Old Testament books, we "fall from heaven to earth." The only noble character in the story is Vashti, the Persian queen, whose place is given to the beautiful but cruel Esther. The majority of critics believe the book to have been written not earlier than 332 B.C. (the beginning of the Greek period), and possibly as late as the year 200.[2]

[1] About the 1st of March.

[2] Among them Ewald, Bleek, Nöldeke, Dillmann, Bertheau, Oettli, Driver, and Toy.

CHAPTER VIII.

HEBREW PROPHECY: ORIGIN OF THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETICAL BOOKS.

The Prophetical Books as Histories.—It is not generally understood how important are the prophetical books as a basis for the historical study of the Bible. We naturally think that for biblical history we must go to the distinctly historical books. But it is now recognized by scholars that the most reliable sources of historical knowledge we have are the prophecies. These are original documents to an extent to which the histories are not. The histories are composites; we do not know who wrote them. We do know who wrote a large part of the prophecies. As far as possible, therefore, a sound scholarship will test the histories by the prophetical books. The higher biblical criticism of to-day is doing this. It is examining the whole Old Testament with the greatest care in the light of the prophetical books—testing everything else by these most certainly authentic witnesses.[1]

The Rise and Character of Hebrew Prophecy.—Before proceeding to a study of these books, a few words should be said about the prophets as a class, and the general subject of prophecy.

Though we have no prophetical writings of an earlier

---

[1] See Kuenen's "Religion of Israel" as perhaps the best illustration of this.

date than the eighth century before Christ, we must not suppose that Hebrew prophecy began with that period. It goes back at least to Samuel's day (1050 B. C.), and perhaps earlier; for we read both that Samuel was a prophet himself, and that he organized schools or communities of prophets.

This early prophetism, however, was of a low order; it was closely connected with soothsaying or fortune-telling, and the manifestation of a kind of unintelligent religious enthusiasm or frenzy.[1] Nevertheless, there was in it a moral element, which steadily grew until the prophets became a great moral power in the nation.

The prophets were leaders in the worship of Jahveh, as distinguished from the worship of the Canaanitish gods which widely prevailed for some centuries after the Conquest. At first they were not monotheists—that is, they did not teach that Jahveh was the *only* god, but only that he was *Israel's* god, and more powerful than the gods of other nations. But from this they rose, by degrees, to the belief that he was the God of all the world.

There was a steady rise, too, in their conception of Jahveh's character. It is true that they identified his will, even from the first, with justice and righteousness; but their conception of these was so imperfect that they were able to think of him as being pleased with, and even demanding, what to us is morally shocking; as, for example, the "hewing of Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal" by Samuel, or the slaying of the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, at the brook Kishon, by Elijah. All this, however, is by degrees left behind; and by the

[1] Samuel himself seems to have taken money from persons for telling them where to find lost things. See 1 Sam. ix.–x.

time we reach the eighth century, we find the prophets of Jahveh believing and teaching an ethical monotheism of a very high order, from which they never afterward lapse or recede.

The Predictive Element in Hebrew Prophecy.—The popular conception is that the main work of the Hebrew prophets was that of predicting future events. Nothing could be farther from the truth.[1] We must put this notion wholly away before we can understand their real influence. Above everything else, they were moral and religious preachers and reformers. Their great word was "righteousness." "God is righteous, and demands righteousness in his people. The righteous nation he will save; the unrighteous nation he will destroy"—this was the burden of their message. True, there was often in their prophecy a predictive element. But it was never the main thing. Always it grew directly out of the *deeper moral* message; it was the announcement of a *penalty* which would come if the moral message was *not heeded.* Thus the prediction was always conditional,[2] and always connected with the times of the prophet who uttered it.[3]

The prophet loved his nation with a passionate love. With all his soul he desired for it safety, prosperity, and peace. He believed the only way these could possibly be secured was by righteous obedience to Jahveh. There-

---

[1] "We have reason to doubt whether prophetic inspiration ever results in the clear and definite knowledge of some single occurrence which is to take place in the future." (Ladd's "Doctrine of Sacred Scripture," vol. i., p. 347.)

[2] See Jer. xviii. 7–10.

[3] "The prophet speaks always, in the first instance, of his own contemporaries: the message which he brings is intimately related with the circumstances of his time." (Driver's "Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament," p. 224.)

fore he urged such obedience, exhorted to it, promised rewards to come from it, warned against neglect of it. At one time he saw danger threatening from Assyria, at another from Babylon, at another from Egypt. "Repent," he cried; "turn from your idols: put away your sins; else the blow will fall, the destruction will come.' Thus he foretold the inevitable consequences which he foresaw, as he believed, must follow the nation's obedience or disobedience of Jahveh, its God.

One thing more the prophet did: he kept the nation from despair. In dark days, when calamity had fallen, when the oppressor's heel was heavy on prostrate Israel, hope lighted its fires in the prophet's soul. Jahveh would not utterly forsake his people; he would repent him of his severity; he would make bare his arm to help; he would *raise up a deliverer*.[1] Thus it was that the prophets prophesied for hundreds of years—strengthening the nation's allegiance to Jahveh, quickening its conscience, deepening its moral life, keeping alive its hope in the darkest midnights of disaster and oppression.

The Prophets not Inerrant.—But these prophets were men, and hence were not inerrant. Not infrequently disasters which they threatened did not come,

---

[1] The hope of a deliverer was what was known as the Messianic expectation. It took many different forms. Perhaps the most common was that of a king like unto David (Messiah means "anointed"—as kings were consecrated to their office by anointing), whom it was hoped and believed God would some time raise up and place on the throne of David, to break the hated yoke of foreign dominion, and make Israel once more a power and a glory on the earth. See Martineau's "Seat of Authority," pp. 326–358; Keim's "Jesus of Nazara," vol. i., pp. 314–327; Toy's "Judaism and Christianity" (Index, "Messiah"); James Drummond's "The Jewish Messiah"; Briggs' "Messianic Prophecy"; Riehm's "Messianic Prophecy"; Kuenen's "Prophets and Prophecy in Israel."

and deliverances which they promised did not appear. Moreover, all the prophets had their individual characteristics, which were not always ideal. Often they were stern, unbending, and ascetic men, unnecessarily repelling by the severity of their speech. Then there were false prophets, whom it was hard to tell from the true. And there were in those times, as now, prophets who "prophesied smooth things," to curry public favor. However, such were very likely then as now sooner or later to come to grief; and certainly the utterances of few such have been preserved. If there is anything upon which critics agree, it is that the prophetical writings which come down to us in the Old Testament are, in the main, honest and earnest writings.

The Prophetical Books: Their Origin, Date, and Authorship.—We are now ready to take up the different prophetical books in their order, to inquire briefly regarding the origin, date, and authorship of each.

There are two different orders in which these books may be studied. One is the chronological order, or the order of the dates of their composition. This order is clearly the natural one. The other is the order in which they stand in our Bible, which is about as far from chronological, and therefore about as unnatural, as possible. This order has in itself little or nothing to recommend it. And yet, because it is the order of our Bible, perhaps it will be on the whole the least confusing and the most easily followed. I shall therefore conform to it.

The Book of Isaiah is the first of the prophetical writings, as we arrange the canon. But the Jews did not so reckon it. The division of the Bible which they called the "Prophets" began with six books which we class as histories, and which I have already considered as such;

namely, Joshua, Judges, First and Second Samuel, and First and Second Kings. These they called the "Earlier Prophets." After these they placed Isaiah and the rest of the prophetical books as we have them, except that they left out Daniel and Lamentations, which we include, giving these a place in the division of the Bible which they called the Hagiography, or The Writings.[1]

Isaiah is not the earliest of the prophetical books, and there seems to be no reason for placing it first except its length and importance. Two, and perhaps three, others take precedence of it in age; namely, Amos, Hosea, and possibly Micah. It is a very long book, of sixty-six chapters; but it is not all from one hand. Chapters I to XXXIX, with the exception of a few passages,[2] are undoubtedly from the prophet Isaiah. Chapters XL to LV are the production of an unknown author living nearly two centuries later, probably in Babylon. For want of any other name he is often called the Second Isaiah. Chapters LVI to LXVI are probably later still, and their authorship also is unknown.

Isaiah belonged to a distinguished family, and is one of the greatest of the Old Testament characters. He came forward as a prophet in Jerusalem about the year 740 B.C., and had a public career of forty years. He was a statesman as well as a prophet. He witnessed the war of Syria and Ephraim against Judah, the fall of Samaria, and the siege of Jerusalem by the Assyrian Sennacherib. The safety and welfare of the nation was the constant burden of his thought and speech. The Bible has no

[1] The Jews separated their Scriptures into the three general divisions, (1) the Law, (2) the Prophets, and (3) the Hagiography.

[2] Chaps. xiii., xiv. 1–23, xv., xvi. 1–12, and probably xxi., xxxiv., and xxxv.

more noble, eloquent, or powerful writer than Isaiah, unless it be the Second Isaiah. When the anonymous portion of the book came to be attached to that written by Isaiah is not known. It could not have been until after the Exile, and very likely it was by accident. Isaiah wrote between 740 and 700 B.C.

The Book of Jeremiah.—The prophet Jeremiah entered upon his work as a public religious teacher in Jerusalem during the reign of Josiah, in the year 626 B.C. He was a man of lofty spirituality and ardent patriotism. Like Isaiah, he lived in troubled times. He saw the fall of the kingdom of Judah, the destruction of the Holy City, and the deportation of the people into captivity, but he himself was not carried away. Later he went with many of his countrymen to Egypt, where he died. The aim of his prophecies was to save his nation from the dangers that threatened. There was never a more earnest preacher of righteousness. The various prophecies that make up his book do not stand in chronological order. Who gathered them together we do not know, but it cannot have been Jeremiah himself. The last three chapters are almost certainly from a later writer.[1] Jeremiah's date is from 626 to 580 B.C., about a century and a quarter after Isaiah.

The Book of Lamentations is made up of five beautiful and very pathetic poems of mourning over the destruction of Jerusalem and the sufferings of the people occasioned thereby. In our Bible it is ascribed to Jeremiah, but the weight of scholarship is against this judgment. It was probably written about the time of

---

[1] Chap. x. 1–16 is also regarded by many scholars as spurious. See especially the Aramaic verse, x. 11.

Jeremiah's death—that is, near 580 B.C. Its author is unknown.

The Book of Ezekiel follows closely in point of time upon the Book of Jeremiah. Its author, a priest as well as a prophet, was carried off to Babylonia with ten thousand other captives in the year 597, eleven years before the destruction of Jerusalem. There he labored as a prophet until about the year 570. His book contains messages of reproof, warning, and comfort to Israel; prophecies against various surrounding nations, and, most notable of all, a great and striking vision of a temple to be built in Jerusalem, an improved ritual of worship, and a restored Israel. In this vision he particularly manifests the priestly spirit, and paves the way for that priestly legislation which is coming in its fullness later. It is plain that the code of Exodus and Numbers could not have been in existence when this vision was written. Ezekiel's style is marked by the boldness of its imagery. His thought is ecclesiastically and perhaps theologically dogmatic and narrow, but his ethical standards are high. The date of his prophecies is 593–570 B.C.

The Book of Daniel.—A book could hardly be more out of place than is the Book of Daniel, standing here, fifth in order among the prophetical books. It used to be believed that it belonged with Ezekiel and Jeremiah in point of time, since Daniel, its supposed author, lived in Babylon during the Captivity. But now the best scholarship is agreed that it was written by a writer whose name is unknown, living in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes (about 165 B.C.), to encourage the Jews to hold out against the oppressions of that monarch, and to assure them of speedy deliverance. Daniel's name was attached to it for the purpose of giving it added weight

and influence. Thus we see that it is really the latest of all the prophetical books. Indeed, it is hardly to be called prophetical. The Jews, as has already been said, did not so class it. It was one of the last of the Old Testament writings to be admitted into the canon, and many scholars have always doubted whether its admission was justifiable. It is an apocalypse rather than a prophecy. Its fanciful, high-colored visions of the future ally it with the apocalyptical Book of Enoch and the Sibylline oracles, which were written about this time, and which had much influence upon the Jews and upon early Christianity. One such book found its way (though with difficulty) into the New Testament; namely, the Revelation.

The Book of Hosea.—This book is the first of the *twelve short* prophetical writings commonly known as the *Minor* Prophecies. By the Jews they were grouped together as one book. We shall notice them separately, but they do not need to detain us long.

In passing from Daniel to Hosea, we go back from the latest to the next to the earliest of the Old Testament prophecies. That is, we leap backward five hundred years. Hosea lived in the northern kingdom of Israel, and prophesied between the years 746 and 722 B.C.

The Book of Joel.—We probably have here to make a long leap *forward*, for though there is uncertainty as to when the prophet Joel lived, scholarship inclines to place him at least three hundred and fifty years later than Hosea, or about the year 400 B.C., during the Persian period.

The Book of Amos.—And now we must take another long leap *backward*, to the very beginning of written prophecy, Amos being the earliest prophet of all those whose writings have been preserved. He was an owner

and tender of sheep and cattle. He lived originally in Judah, but seems to have spent his prophetical life in the Northern Kingdom. His prophecies are of a high order. They were directed against the idolatry and wickedness of his time. It has already been pointed out that Amos and his younger contemporary, Hosea, seem to have been the first of the Hebrew prophets to teach a pure ethical monotheism. This was probably about 750 B.C.

The Book of Obadiah is very short, and relatively unimportant. Its single chapter consists of a prophecy against Edom. The prophet Obadiah is unknown to us save through this brief writing. His date is about 580 B.C., a little after the devastation of Jerusalem.

The Book of Jonah.—In this book we have something unique, and of more than ordinary interest. The prophet Jonah is a historical character, of whom we have mention in 2 Kings xiv. 25. But this work cannot be from him. It was probably written in the fifth century, and is a work of pure fiction—a religious apologue. The age from which it came (that of Ezra and Nehemiah) was one of intense legalism and narrowness, which would fence in the Jews from all the rest of the world, as the only people for whom God cares. The book is a protest against this spirit. By means of the story of the prophet sent to preach to Nineveh, a heathen city, it shows God's love and mercy to be world-wide. Regarded as history, the book contains absurdities which no ingenuity can explain away. But as a work of fiction, written to teach a lesson of religious tolerance, it is one of the noblest books in the Bible.

The Book of Micah.—In Micah we have one of the earlier prophets, living in the eighth century (735–702

B.C.), contemporaneous with the prophet Isaiah. In spirit he seems to have been somewhat gloomy; one of his leading thoughts was that of retribution—God's sure punishment of the people for their sins. The Assyrians were threatening: he predicts great devastations from them, but eventual victory and deliverance for Israel. His utterances often suggest Isaiah. There is no purer or loftier religious teaching found in the Old Testament than that of some of his passages.

The Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah.—These prophecies all come from the seventh century B.C. —Nahum's and Zephaniah's from about the year 630, and Habakkuk's from about 605. They are directed against the surrounding nations, and have no characteristics that demand especial mention.

The Book of Haggai dates from the year 520 B.C., a few years after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity. It is an earnest exhortation to the governor and people to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem.

The Book of Zechariah is noticeable in the fact that it contains writings from three different prophets. The Zechariah (son of Berechia, son of Iddo) who wrote chapters i. to viii. was a contemporary of Haggai, whom he aided in his efforts to bring about the rebuilding of the temple. As to the time of the second author, who wrote chapters ix. to xi., critics are much divided. Some assign him to the seventh century B.C., and some to the fourth. There is not much more certainty as to the date of the third author, from whom came chapters xii. to xiv. How the mistake came to be made of putting the three different prophecies together as one, we cannot tell. Possibly the writers may all have had the same name, or names very similar, and this may have caused it.

The Book of Malachi stands in our canon as the last of the prophecies, and the end of the Old Testament. The date given to it there is 397 B.C., which is not far from right, the best authorities assigning it to about the year 420 B.C. It is permeated by the legal spirit, the spirit of Ezra, from whose age it comes.

This completes our glance at the various prophetical books of the Old Testament. The glance has been brief, and yet sufficient to give us the main facts as to their dates and authorship, as scholarship has brought these to light; and also sufficient to show that more earnest, more honest, more intensely real, more intensely natural and human utterances, or utterances of greater moral power, or of more permanent religious significance to the world, were never penned, than some of these prophecies of ancient Israel.[1]

The golden age of Hebrew prophecy was the eighth and seventh centuries—that is, the two centuries immediately preceding the Captivity in Babylon. The greatest name in those centuries is Isaiah. The prophetic spirit blazed up again with renewed splendor for a little while at the time of the Captivity, in Jeremiah and the Second Isaiah;

---

[1] Readers who desire to make a more extended study of the Old Testament prophetical books are referred to the following works: Kuenen's "Religion of Israel," "Prophets and Prophecy in Israel," and "National Religions and Universal Religions," lects. ii. and iii.; Driver's, Davidson's, and other Introductions to the Old Testament; Robertson Smith's "Prophets of Israel," and "Old Testament in the Jewish Church," chap. x.; articles "Prophet," by W. R. Smith and A. Harnack, and "Israel," by Wellhausen, in Encyclopædia Britannica; Noyes' "Translations of the Prophets, with Notes"; Ewald's "Prophets of the Old Testament"; Renan's "History of the People of Israel," vols. ii. and iii.; Stanley's "History of the Jewish Church," vol. i., lects. xviii.–xx.; Riehm's "Messianic Prophecy"; Herford's "Prophecies of the Captivity."

and after the Captivity also there were prophets; but a decline had set in. Now a different power was rising to the ascendant, the power of the priests. Men were more and more turning their eyes to the past. Tradition was growing in influence. Codes of law were drawn up; and more and more these usurped the place of the prophets' open vision. Here and there a fresh prophetic voice was lifted up, but it seemed like an echo from the past. Under the pressure of the legal system and the hierarchy that rapidly developed after the Exile, prophecy waned and died, not to appear again until it rose in that splendid final re-birth which gave the world Christianity.

CHAPTER IX.

HEBREW POETRY: ORIGIN OF THE OLD TESTAMENT POETICAL BOOKS.

HEBREW poetry is very ancient, going back far beyond historic times. With the Hebrews, as with most other peoples, the earliest form of literary expression of thought and feeling was rhythmical. In the Pentateuch and the historical books of the Old Testament there are preserved many poetical pieces, some longer and some shorter, which are doubtless much more ancient than their setting; it seems likely that they were composed by unknown bards, and repeated or sung from generation to generation among the people, before they found a place in the histories where they now are.[1]

There are also in the prophetical writings of the Old Testament many poetical passages. Indeed, as the greater

[1] Among the more important of these are the Blessing of Jacob, Gen. xlix.; the Songs of Moses and Miriam at the Red Sea, Ex. xv.; several brief poetical passages (taken from the "Book of the Wars of the Lord"), Num. xxi.; the Prophecy of Balaam, Num. xxiii.–xxiv.; the Song of Moses, and the Blessing of Moses, Deut. xxxii.–xxxiii.; some lines about the standing still of the sun and moon at Gibeon and Ajalon (from the Book of Jasher), Josh. x.; the Song of Deborah and Barak, Judg. v.; David's Lament over Jonathan, 2 Sam. i. (from the Book of Jasher); the Song and the Last Words of David, 2 Sam. xxii.–xxiii. It should be noted that there is much difference of judgment about the dates of these passages. Some are doubtless ancient; others contain lines or longer fragments that are ancient; others give signs of being nearly or quite as late as the historical writings in which they are imbedded.

prophets, like Isaiah and the Second Isaiah, rise to their loftiest strains, their prose tends constantly to become imaginative and emotional in its character, and to take on rhythmic forms, and thus to pass over into poetry. Thus the line between poetry and prose in the Bible is not always clearly drawn.

There are, however, *five* books, not falling under the head of history or prophecy, which may properly be classed by themselves as *Poetical Books*. These are Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. Let us inquire very briefly concerning the origin, authorship, and character of each of these.

The Book of Job stands first. By common consent this is one of the greatest and most splendid poems of the world. In structure it is essentially dramatic, while in aim it is didactic. It has a prose introduction, and a very short prose conclusion, but the great body of the work is highly poetical. That there was a real personage named Job, and that he was an eminent and a good man, who passed through some such disasters as those depicted in this book, is somewhat probable. And yet, that the work as a whole is a creation of the imagination is beyond question.

The poem is a portion of what is known as the wisdom-literature of the ancient Hebrews. It is an attempt on the part of the author to answer the question, Why does God permit calamity and suffering to come upon the righteous? Especially it is an effort to refute the prevailing notion of the time that disasters are sent upon men as punishments for their sins, so that it can be known whether a man is good or bad by the outward prosperity or adversity that attends him. Against this idea the whole nature of the writer protests, and in the form of a

story he constructs an elaborate argument to refute it. The story is of a pious man named Job, supposed to live in patriarchal times, and in the land of Uz. For a long time he is prosperous in the highest degree: he has sons and daughters, flocks and herds in great numbers, wealth and honors. Suddenly great misfortunes befall him; he loses his possessions, he loses all his children; to crown his miseries, he is stricken with a terrible disease. Three friends come to condole with him; in accordance with the popular belief, they urge him to contrition, for it must be on account of his great sins that all these calamities have been sent upon him. But Job stoutly maintains that he is not a great sinner, and never has been; that he has always walked in integrity and justice, and if he can only see God he will plead his cause before him face to face, and prove his innocence. Notwithstanding his sufferings, he does not lose his confidence in God. An explanation of suffering suggested by one of the characters of the book is that it is sent to make men better. When Job and his friends are done speaking, Jahveh is represented as appearing upon the scene and answering them all, in one of the sublimest passages in literature; not deigning to explain, but in the most magnificent imagery affirming his eternal power and wisdom, which puny man may not presume to comprehend, but to which it is his duty and highest wisdom reverently to bow. The poem ends by representing Job as regaining his prosperity and happiness.

As an answer to the profound question with which it sets out, the book can be pronounced only partially successful. But as to its literary merits, and especially as to the splendor of many of its individual passages, it can hardly be overpraised. It lacks, however, in unity, and

scholars are almost unanimous in the judgment that it contains matter which is from a later hand than that of the original writer. The speech of Elihu (chaps. xxxii.–xxxvii.) falls under this head, as possibly also does the prose ending (xlii. 7–17), the discourse on Wisdom in chapter xxviii., and several other less important passages.

There has been much conjecture as to the authorship of the book. In past ages, before the birth of critical Bible scholarship, it was common to look upon the poem as a narrative of literal history, and then its composition was often assigned to the age of Moses, and even to Moses himself. But all this has passed by. All that can be said is that its authorship is unknown, and will probably always remain so. So, too, we are in doubt as to the place of abode of the author. Some critics have said in Northern Palestine, some in Southern, some in the extreme Southeastern, some in Arabia. The latest and most competent judgment inclines toward Southern Palestine. The same judgment also inclines strongly toward a comparatively late date for the poem. Says Prof. A. B. Davidson: "Only late, when the [Jewish] state began to receive fatal blows from without, and when through revolution and civil discord at home great and unmerited sufferings befell the best citizens in the state, would such problems [as those which form the burden of the Book of Job] arise with an urgency that demanded some solution. . . . Job probably has behind it some public calamity which forced the question of evil on men's minds with an urgency that could not be resisted. Such a calamity, wide and national, could be nothing less than the dismemberment or subjugation of the state. . . . Somewhere in the troubled period between the early part of the seventh and the early part

of the fifth century the poem may have been written. Ewald and many distinguished writers on the book support the earlier date, while on the part of living scholars there is rather a growing feeling that the book is later than some of the prophecies of Jeremiah." This would carry it into the period of the Captivity. Kuenen thinks the calamity referred to was the defeat and death of Josiah (609 B.C.), half a generation before the Captivity. Much weighty critical judgment inclines to the later and heavier calamity of the fall of Jerusalem and the kingdom of Judah (586 B.C.). Indeed, there are not wanting critics of high rank who bring the authorship of the book down a hundred years this side of the Captivity, to the period of Ezra. Professor Toy, our highest American authority on Old Testament criticism, is among these.[1]

The Book of Psalms.—Perhaps of no book in the Bible is it easier to understand the origin and significance, than of the Psalter, if we but bear in mind that it *is* the Psalter, the hymn-book of the Jewish Church. We know how hymn-books come into existence in our day. Biblical scholarship shows with ever increasing clearness that the Book of Psalms which we find in our Old Testament came into existence in essentially the same way. It grew as the needs of the Hebrew people

[1] For a condensed statement of reasons for placing the date as late as the Captivity, see Driver's "Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament." Among the best works on the Book of Job as a whole are T. K. Cheyne's "Job and Solomon"; A. B. Davidson's Book of Job, with notes, in Cambridge Bible; also his article on "Job" in the Encyclopædia Britannica; Ewald's "Book of Job" (translation published by Williams & Norgate, London); Driver's and S. Davidson's Old Testament Introductions; article on "Job" in Froude's "Short Studies," vol. i.; Momerie's "Modern Christianity, and other Sermons" (a large part devoted to an analysis of Job); Genung's "Epic of the Inner Life."

grew; it grew as the hymnology of the people developed, enlarged, became richer. We call it one book, and so it is. Yet it is made up of five smaller books. That is to say, five distinct collections of psalms are traceable in it.

Book I. (or Collection I.) includes Psalms i. to xli., and ends with the doxology:

> "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
> From everlasting and to everlasting.
> Amen, and Amen."

Book II. includes Psalms xlii. to lxxii., and ends with the doxology:

> "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel,
> Who only doeth wondrous things:
> And blessed be his glorious name forever;
> And let the whole earth be filled with his glory.
> Amen, and Amen."

Book III. begins with Psalm lxxiii. and ends with Psalm lxxxix., concluding with the doxology:

> "Blessed be the Lord for evermore.
> Amen, and Amen."

Book IV. includes Psalms xc. to cvi., and ends with the doxology:

> "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
> From everlasting even to everlasting.
> And let all the people say, Amen.
> Praise ye the Lord."

Book V. includes Psalms cvii. to cl. (the end) and concludes with a doxological psalm:

> "Praise ye the Lord.
> Praise God in his sanctuary:
> Praise him in the firmament of his power," etc.

Says Prof. Robertson Smith: "The doxologies, with the exception of that in Book IV., plainly form no part

of the psalms to which they are attached, but mark the end of each *book*, after the pious fashion, not uncommon in Eastern literature, to close the composition or transcription of a volume with a brief prayer or words of praise." [1]

These five books or collections of psalms were formed at different times, probably most if not all of them for use in the second temple. Finally all the collections were gathered into one, thus forming the Book of Psalms as we have it. This could not have been much if any earlier than the year 150 B.C.

What is to be said as to the question of authorship? If we turn to our common English version, we find that a large number of the individual psalms have titles. Some of these titles purport to give the time when and the circumstances under which the psalms were composed, and the names of the writers. Many of the titles are such as these: "A Psalm of David"; "A Psalm of Asaph"; "A Psalm of Solomon"; "A Psalm of David when Nathan the prophet came to him after he had sinned with Bathsheba"; "A Psalm of David when Doeg the Edomite came," etc. If these titles are reliable, we have here considerable information as to the authors of the various psalms and the occasion of their composition. Are they reliable? It is the almost unanimous verdict of scholarship that they are not. They are of a late date, probably not in a single case coming from the original writer of a psalm. Says Professor Driver: "They contain no authentic tradition respecting the authorship of the psalms, or the occasions on which they were composed." [2]

---

[1] "Old Testament in Jewish Church," p. 184.

[2] "Introduction to Literature of Old Testament," p. 352.

It used to be the common belief that most of the psalms were written by David.[1] Now no scholar of any standing holds to the Davidic authorship of more than a few. Ewald says eleven; Hitzig, fourteen; Delitzsch, forty-four. Dr. Robertson Smith is able to point out only two that he feels sure are David's. Kuenen and Reuss think none are from David. Professor Toy thinks the same. Professor Cheyne doubts whether any psalms are even pre-exilic. Professor Driver gives up the problem after a careful presentation of the arguments pro and con, saying: "On the whole, a *Non liquet* must be our verdict: it is possible that Ewald's list of Davidic psalms is too large, but it is not clear that none of the psalms contained in it are of David's composition."[2]

Who, then, did write these precious hymns of the ages? We can only answer, Many devout souls of ancient Israel, living all the way along, possibly from David's time (Professor Toy says from Hezekiah's, 700 B.C.) down to the time of the Maccabees, a century and a half before the Christian era.

The Book of Proverbs.—This work, besides being poetical, belongs to that class of writings (already mentioned) which rose to considerable importance among the Hebrews, known as "Wisdom Books." We are apt to think of the moral and religious life of Israel as wholly molded by the prophets and the priests. But this is a mistake. As early as the times of David and Solomon there arose, side by side with the priests and prophets, a third class of men known as "sages," who exerted considerable influence, and in the later centuries, after the

[1] The titles ascribe seventy-three to him.

[2] "Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament," p. 358.

return from the Captivity, a very profound influence, upon the thought of the people. From this class of men came three of the books of the Old Testament; namely, Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes, and also two valuable works (Ecclesiasticus, or the Wisdom of the Son of Sirach, and the Wisdom of Solomon) which may be found in the Old Testament Apocrypha, but which never gained admission to the Hebrew canon. While the prophets were preachers and statesmen, and while the priests were regulators and conductors of public worship, the sages were thinkers, philosophers, men who concerned themselves with the problems, theoretical and practical, which forever thrust themselves upon man's thought. Some of these sages were not men of very distinctly religious thinking, but employed themselves in making shrewd observations on men and things—wise sayings, proverbs, as illustrated in the Book of Proverbs—while others dealt with the profoundest themes of religion, as seen in the Book of Job.

The Book of Proverbs is not the work of any single one of these sages, but represents the labors of many. Indeed, it may be thought of as a sort of thesaurus of the proverb literature of Israel for many centuries.

Scholars recognize in the book at least seven distinct divisions, for the most part marked by separate titles or introductions. The most important of these are chapters i. 8 to ix. 18, which consist, not of detached proverbs, but of connected discourses in praise of wisdom; chapters x. 1 to xxii. 16, which consist of three hundred and seventy-four verses, each of which contains a single proverb or maxim in two antithetical lines (as "A wise son maketh a glad father, but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother"); and chapters xxv. to xxix., made up of

detached and simple proverbs, perhaps the oldest in the book.

As to the claim made in the first verse of the first chapter, that these proverbs are from Solomon, a word should be said. A conservative scholar shall speak it. Says Prof. A. B. Davidson: "A number of them (the proverbs) may well be by Solomon, and a greater number may belong to his age; but, though the stream of wisdom began to flow in his day, its beginnings were then comparatively small; as the centuries advanced it gathered volume. In the book which now exists we find gathered together the most precious fruits of the wisdom in Israel during many hundred years, and undoubtedly the later centuries were richer, or at all events fuller, in their contributions than the earlier."[1] Doubtless it was the same impulse in the Hebrew people which led them to ascribe their proverbs generally to Solomon as that which caused them to think of David as their chief psalmist.[2]

What shall we say about dates? Delitzsch thinks the oldest collection (chaps. x. 1 to xxii. 16) was made about the year 900 B.C. Ewald puts it a hundred years later. Other collections were made at widely different dates, probably some as late as post-exilic times, or even the Greek period. The final gathering together of all into the Book of Proverbs, as we now have it, can hardly have been effected earlier than the second century B.C.

The Book of Ecclesiastes.—This book is poor poetry,

---

[1] Ency. Brit., art. "Proverbs."

[2] It seems to have been the same impulse among other peoples that caused the Greeks to ascribe most of their sententious maxims to Pythagoras, the Arabs theirs to Lokman and a few others, and the Scandinavian nations theirs to Odin.

as it is also poor religion. It belongs to the "Wisdom Books," but its philosophy is that of pessimism. The writer has sought in all directions for happiness, but it is not to be found. He has tried riches, fame, knowledge, the gratification of all his desires, but it is vanity—there is nothing anywhere but vanity and vexation of spirit. Everything passes away; man himself passes away; there is no hereafter for man. The only redeeming feature about the book is that the jaded and despairing author would have men avoid excess, and keep the fear of God before their eyes. It is one of the unaccountable things about the Bible, that men could ever have received this book into the canon as the inspired word of God, and at the same time have kept out a book like the apocryphal "Wisdom of Solomon," with its broad and catholic spirit and its high views of God and life and immortality.

The author of the Book of Ecclesiastes is unknown. The claim that the work is from Solomon has nothing whatever to support it. It was probably written in the second or third century before Christ.[1]

The Song of Solomon.—If the Higher Criticism had done nothing else than to give us, as it has done, a reasonable interpretation of this poem, our obligation to it would be great. No other book of the Bible has been so misunderstood, so travestied. On the one hand it has been declared to be an erotic poem, breathing throughout an impure and lustful spirit, and hence unfit to be read. On the other hand, we have been told that it is a divine

[1] Ewald, Delitzsch, and Cheyne fix its date at not earlier than the last years of the Persian rule, which ended 332 B.C.; and Nöldeke, Hitzig, Kuenen, Driver, and Toy at about 200 B.C.

allegory, setting forth the love of Christ for his Church, and that every sensuous image in it is a symbol of something spiritual. Thus, turning to the English Bible that lies on my table, I find such headings of chapters as these: "The Church's love unto Christ"; "Christ's love to the Church"; "The Church glorieth in Christ"; "A description of Christ by his graces"; "Christ setteth forth the graces of the Church"; "Christ directeth her to the shepherd's tents, and showeth his love to her." The Higher Criticism tells us that both these interpretations are without justification. The poem is not impure in spirit or intent, though its imagery transcends the limits of propriety according to our canons of literary expression. On the other hand, there is not a shadow of justification for turning it into an allegory; it has no more reference to Christ and his Church than to Adam and Eve, or to Antony and Cleopatra. The book is not religious, and one looks in vain for any justification for its having a place in a sacred book. But it is not immoral. It is a little love-drama—a simple story, in dramatic verse, of an ardent but pure love, that refuses all blandishments, and remains true to its object.[1] As a

[1] Professor Driver thus outlines the plot of the drama: "A beautiful Shulamite maiden, surprised by the king and his train on a royal progress in the north, has been brought to the palace at Jerusalem, where the king hopes to win her affections, and to induce her to exchange her rustic home for the honor and enjoyments which a court life could afford. She has, however, already pledged her heart to a young shepherd, and the admiration and blandishments which the king lavishes upon her are powerless to make her forget him. In the end she is permitted to return to her mountain home, where, at the close of the poem, the lovers appear hand in hand, and express, in warm and glowing words, the superiority of genuine, spontaneous affection over that which may be purchased by wealth or rank" (Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament, pp. 410–411).

poem it is exquisite. Its imagery of nature, and its pictures of country life, are among the most beautiful in literature. The old view that it was written by Solomon is now almost wholly abandoned. Its date is probably 300–200 B.C.

It would be quite unfair to the poetry of the Bible if we failed to point out how much it has suffered at the hands of translators, editors, and printers in not being given to English readers in proper literary form. The "Authorized Version" and most other English Bibles of the past have printed all the poetry of whatever kind — all the poetical books, and all the poetical fragments in other books — as prose. Could greater literary injustice be done to any writings? Think of printing Tennyson's "Idyls of the King," Milton's "Samson," Burns' love songs, and Wesley's hymns, as prose! That would not be worse than printing "Job," "Canticles" and the "Psalms" as prose. Happily, at last the Bible is beginning to receive treatment that is a little more civilized. In the "Revised Version" all poetry is printed under the literary forms of poetry. The same is true of all other recent revisions and translations of any value. The result will be a great new appreciation of the beauty and worth of the poetry of the Bible in all its forms.

CHAPTER X.

THE GOSPELS: THEIR ORIGIN AND CHARACTER.—I.

HAVING completed our study of the books of the Old Testament, we pass now to those of the New.

What is the New Testament?—A little examination shows us that it easily and naturally divides into two pretty nearly equal parts. The first is made up of the four Gospels; the second of the books (twenty-three in number) that follow the Gospels. In other words, the first part gives us the literature of the life and teachings of Jesus; and the second, the literature of the disciples and followers of Jesus, and of the planting of the Christian Church.

In the present chapter we shall deal with the first three Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke—asking about them the same questions that have been asked about the Old Testament books: Who wrote them? When were they written? What are they?

It is a very common impression in men's minds, that the Gospels were the earliest composed of the New Testament books. Both the fact that they stand first in order in our canon, and also the fact that they treat of Jesus, who was the beginning of the New Testament movement, would seem to favor that impression. Nevertheless, the impression is untrue. The earliest written books of the New Testament, as we shall see in another chapter, were the Epistles of St. Paul.

The First Gospel Story Oral, not Written.—For

nearly or quite a generation, knowledge of the life and teachings of Jesus was spread abroad solely by the lips of men—first of disciples, and then of those who had received the story from disciples—before it was committed to the written page. Thus our Gospel records rest upon a background of tradition. At the outset of every study of the New Testament it is of the greatest importance that this be clearly understood.

Jesus himself wrote nothing. Nor is it strange that so long as he was living no one else should have thought to write an account of his words and deeds. When his followers after his death began to go about telling his story, and preaching his gospel, everything was fresh in their memory; hence, what need was there yet for written records? Moreover, they expected him soon to return; and when they had *him*, what would they care for writings about him?

How and why Written Records began to be made.—But time passed on, and Jesus did not return; moreover, the recollections, at first so distinct and vivid, tended to grow dim as the years multiplied; and, most serious of all, one and another of those who had known him best began to be taken away by death. Then arose a feeling of need for written memorials.

But who should write them? Jesus had commissioned no one to do it. Who should assume the responsibility? And if they wrote, in what form should it be? Meanwhile, oral traditions, more or less definite, were springing up, based upon the preaching of the different apostles; and, side by side with these, as was inevitable, fictitious stories, exaggerations, legends, seeking for incorporation with the traditions.

Such was the general condition of things out of which,

possibly twenty-five or thirty years after the death of Jesus, there began, in some way and by some hands, the work of writing out memorials of the great life and the great teachings.

We must not suppose, however, that those first memorials were our present Gospels. The biblical scholarship of our century has settled it beyond a question that at least three of our Gospels—namely, the synoptics: Matthew, Mark, and Luke—are compilations, which reached their present form only after several redactions.[1]

Have we any trace of those earlier memorials or documents which lie back of these Gospels? Yes; at least a few.

The Earliest Documents.—It happens that many works of Christian writers of the first two or three centuries have been preserved to our day. Through those early writings we get traces of a number of Gospels or fragments of Gospels, and other documents, longer or shorter, which were early in circulation among the churches—all of them purporting to give information about Jesus. It will be of interest to name some of these. Perhaps the most important are the following:

1. A collection of *Sayings of the Lord*, ascribed to *Matthew;* not the same as our Gospel of Matthew, but probably later embodied in Matthew's Gospel.

---

[1] It should be noted that the titles of our Gospels are not "The Gospel *of* Matthew," "*of* Mark," etc., but "The Gospel *according to*" Matthew, Mark, and the others. This is significant. It would seem to intimate that the Gospels do not intend to claim for themselves the actual authorship of these men, but only a general conformity of their contents to some document or well-known oral tradition coming from them. See "Protestant Commentary on the New Testament," vol. i., p. 34.

2. A collection of rather miscellaneous *Memorabilia of Events in the Life of Jesus*, said to have been taken down from the preaching of *Peter*, by *Mark;* evidently shorter and less orderly than our Gospel of Mark, but probably forming the basis of this Gospel.

3. A *Gospel according to the Hebrews*, which seems to have been used extensively in the first and second centuries by the Ebionites, or Jewish Christians of Palestine. It is sometimes referred to as the *Gospel of the Ebionites*, or of the *Nazarenes*. Extensive fragments of it have been preserved in the writings of St. Jerome.

4. A *Gospel of the Egyptians*, which seems to have had an extensive circulation in Egypt. It seems to have been much tinctured with Philonism.

5. A *Gospel of the Lord*, so-called; also sometimes designated as *Marcion's Gospel*, because it was the Gospel used by the heretic Marcion and his sect in the second century. It seems to have had much in common with our Gospel of Luke.

Thus we see that our present New Testament Gospels are not the only, or even the earliest, accounts that were written of the life and teachings of Jesus.

Nor is this all. By the discovery of these primitive Gospel documents we are able to take what seems to be a sure step toward an analysis of at least two of our present Gospels into their original component elements. How much influence the ancient Gospels of the Hebrews, the Egyptians, and of Marcion may have had upon our synoptics we cannot tell—possibly not much; but that the Sayings (or the *Logia*) of Matthew, and the *Memorabilia* of Mark are the most important documents entering into the formation of our present Matthew and Mark, is the widespread and growing judgment of New Testament

scholarship. Indeed, it is believed that our first two Gospels take their names from these two documents.[1]

The Composition of the Synoptic Gospels.—We may, with considerable probability, regard the three Synoptics as made up as follows:

The First Gospel, Matthew, has the *Logia*, or the Collection of the Sayings of Jesus made by St. Matthew, as its basis; hence the fact that it so much surpasses the other Gospels in the number of the sayings of the Master which it contains. To this basis document is added, as second in importance, a framework of biographical narrative borrowed from the Mark document. Later, other elements also are added, partly from current tradition, and very likely partly from written documents now lost.

The Second Gospel, Mark, has as its basis the Mark document—the Memorabilia of Events in the Life of Jesus, gathered by Mark from the preaching of Peter. But to this there are added many sayings of Jesus, taken, seemingly, from the Matthew document, and also matter from sources which to us are unknown.

The Third Gospel, Luke, we cannot speak of with quite so much certainty. That it is a compilation by one who had before him various written documents is indicated in its opening verses. What were those documents? We can only say that they must have included some of the most important original sources of both Matthew and

[1] The so-called "Gospel of Peter," a fragment of which, in Greek, has recently been brought to light, does not date earlier than some distance on in the second century, and hence belongs properly with the "Apocryphal Gospels" mentioned in a later chapter of this book. It seems to throw some little side light, possibly, upon two or three questions connected with the origin and dates of our canonical Gospels. As yet, however, this is uncertain; and, in any event, the fragment discovered is not of great importance.

Mark, else there seems to be no way of accounting for the remarkable similarities running through all three Gospels.

The Oldest Gospel.—The question is of prime importance, Which of our Gospels is the oldest? Many scholars of very high standing hold to the view, generally entertained by the Church in the past, that the priority must be assigned to Matthew.[1] This view, however, can no longer claim the best support. As far back as the 18th century, Herder, in Germany, put forth the theory of the priority of Mark. The great influence of Schleiermacher, who held the opposite opinion, crowded Herder's, for a time, out of sight, and not until it was revived and set forth anew by Hermann Weisse, in 1838, did it attract the general attention of New Testament scholars. Since Weisse, however, it has been steadily gaining ground, and to-day may be said to have decidedly the weight of scholarship in its favor. Besides Herder and Weisse, I may name as its advocates on the continent of Europe, Wilke, Schenkel, Volkmar, Weizsäcker, Pfleiderer, Bernhard Weiss, and Holtzmann. It is also supported in this country and England by such scholars as Martineau, in his "Seat of Authority in Religion"; Dr. E. A. Abbott, in his able article on the Gospels in the Encyclopædia Britannica; Prof. Estlin Carpenter, in his "Synoptic Gospels," and Dr. Cone, in his "Gospel-Criticism." In company with such authorities we need not shrink from the judgment that Mark is probably our oldest Gospel.

As to the Gospel next in age, the weight of authority is probably in favor of Matthew, with Luke following as

[1] Among them, such names as F. C. Baur, Hilgenfeld, Keim, and Davidson.

third; though Pfleiderer and Carpenter and other writers of first rank put Luke second and Matthew third. But the question is by no means so important whether Matthew or Luke is second, as the question, Is Mark first?

Mark's Priority Significant.—If Mark is our oldest Gospel, it throws great new light upon the whole development of New Testament thought. For Mark is unquestionably the simplest Gospel, the one that represents Jesus as the most distinctly and simply human, and enunciates his message in the most easily understood form. While Matthew begins with a long and impossible genealogical table, and a whole cycle of miraculous birth-stories; while Luke devotes the most of its first two chapters also to birth-stories filled with supernatural marvels; and while John begins its story in heaven, by representing the Eternal Word as becoming incarnate and descending to earth, Mark begins with the simple and plain words, "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ."[1] Mark also omits those stories of the reappearance of Jesus after his resurrection which have most the appearance of legend. So, too, Mark's Gospel shows a steady growth and progress in Jesus' mental and spiritual history. While Matthew and Luke represent the idea of his Messiahship as clear in his mind from the beginning, Mark gives the impression that it grows in his thought by degrees, the first clear recognition of it being given at Cæsarea Philippi, after his ministry was far advanced.

It is this greater simplicity of Mark's Gospel, its greater naturalness in portraying Jesus, its comparative freedom from legendary traces, from marks of elaboration, and

[1] The words "the Son of God" are doubtful, being omitted by some ancient manuscripts.

from expressions and allusions of various kinds betraying long intervals of time and later dates, that is causing the leading scholars of the world more and more to accept the view that this Gospel is the oldest.

Dates of the Synoptic Gospels.—What dates must we assign to Matthew, Mark, and Luke?

There has undoubtedly been a tendency, within the past twenty years, away from the extremely late dates advocated by the early Tübingen critics. One of the hopeful signs of the times in biblical criticism is the manifest tendency of extreme parties to draw nearer to each other, and to find common ground. There is still much difference of view as to the dates of the Gospels, but the best authorities now pretty generally agree at least in this: that one of the synoptics, and that one either Mark or Matthew, must have been written as early as about the destruction of Jerusalem, which occurred in the year 70 A.D.; and that the other two synoptics were probably produced within the next twenty or thirty years. So, then, if we accept Mark as written first, and Matthew second, we shall have the date of Mark falling between 70 and 75; that of Matthew somewhere between 75 and 90; and Luke between 85 and 100.

It must be understood, however, that these dates refer to the final *compilation* of each Gospel, the time when it was put in essentially the form in which it comes down to us, and not the time of origin of any of the subordinate documents. Both the *Logia*, or Collection of Sayings of Matthew, and the Mark document, undoubtedly go back a few years further, perhaps to the year 60, possibly to 55—that is, to within twenty-five or thirty years of the death of Christ.

BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO THEIR NATURE AND LITERARY FORM.

I. *Biography* (4 Books).
Matthew.
Mark.
Luke.
John (Philosophical Biography).

II. *History* (1 Book).
Acts.

III. *Epistles or Letters* (20 Books).
Romans.
1 and 2 Corinthians.
Galatians.
Ephesians.
Philippians.
Colossians.
1 and 2 Thessalonians.
1 and 2 Timothy.
Titus.
Philemon.
Hebrews.
James.
1 and 2 Peter.
1, 2, and 3 John.
Jude.

IV. *Apocalypse* (1 Book).
Revelation.

IN THEIR (APPROXIMATELY) TRUE CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER, ACCORDING TO THE HIGHER CRITICISM.

(See Table of "Dates of Biblical Literature" between pp. 58 and 59.)

1 Thessalonians.
2 Thessalonians (if Paul's).
Galatians.
1 and 2 Corinthians.
Romans.
Philemon.
Philippians.
Gospel of Mark.
Hebrews.
Gospel of Matthew.
1 Peter.
James.
Gospel of Luke.
Acts.
Colossians (if not Paul's).
Ephesians (if not Paul's).
1 and 2 Timothy.
Titus.
1, 2, and 3 John.
Gospel of John.
Jude.
Revelation (final form).
2 Peter.

CHAPTER XI.

THE GOSPELS: THEIR ORIGIN AND CHARACTER.—II.

The Fourth Gospel.—I pass now from the synoptics to the fourth Gospel, known as the Gospel according to John.

We have seen that the synoptics are compilations. The fourth Gospel probably is not, or, at least, it is clear that the *main part* of it was written by a single author. Who was that author?

We reach here one of the most hotly disputed questions in New Testament criticism. The common view held by the Christian Church in the past has been that the writer of this Gospel was John, the disciple of Jesus. To-day, scholars who are committed to orthodoxy or evangelicalism generally hold the same view, though all such by no means do; there are some very eminent exceptions. Some liberal and independent scholars, too, hold it. I think, however, that I shall be within the truth if I say that, of the most eminent and trustworthy authorities in New Testament criticism within recent time, fully one half reject the authorship of John.[1] And it is plain that this view is the steadily growing one.[2]

---

[1] As a few among the number, I may name F. C. Baur, J. J. Tayler, Keim, Holtzmann, Scholten, Pfleiderer, Schürer, Davidson, Martineau, Carpenter, E. A. Abbott, Cone, B. W. Bacon.

[2] A mediating view, however, should be noticed. In addition to, and in a sense mediating between, the two positions named above (1, that which maintains the full apostolic authorship of the fourth Gospel, and, 2, that

When was the fourth Gospel written?

The answer which must be given to this question depends upon what we decide as to the authorship. If we go with those who say that John wrote the Gospel, then we must hold that it was probably written a little before the year 100—when John was a very old man—a thing which seems very difficult to believe, since its characteristics are anything but those betraying senility. If we go with those who say it could not have come from John, then we shall find ourselves obliged to push its date on into the second century, perhaps to the first decade, perhaps much farther than that.

Contrasts between the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel.—It is important to understand the very marked and significant differences and even contrasts that exist between the synoptics and the fourth Gospel. These are particularly noticeable as regards the pictures they paint for us of Jesus. Probably few persons who have not had their attention called specifically to the subject realize at all adequately how far apart are the Jesus of John and the Jesus of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. True, there are differences in the representations of the synoptics. Each synoptic writer has his own standpoint, and each employs his own emphasis and his own shading in portraying Christ. Nevertheless, in the records of all three the main events in Christ's life and the leading

---

which wholly denies it), there is a *third*, which finds favor with some scholars of ability and candor—as Wendt in Germany and Cone in America. This view is that the fourth Gospel as it comes to us is the production not of John but of a post-apostolic writer; but that this writer possessed and embodied in his Gospel a genuine Johannine writing, which bears essentially the same relation to the completed fourth Gospel that the *Logia* of Matthew does to the completed synoptic Gospels. There is considerable to be said in favor of this view.

elements of his character are the same. Not so when we pass over into the fourth Gospel. Here nearly everything is different. The synoptics represent Christ's public ministry as only one year in length; the fourth Gospel as three years. According to the synoptics, his ministry was carried on almost wholly in Galilee, and only once did he visit Jerusalem, and that was near the close of his life. According to the fourth Gospel, he visited Jerusalem repeatedly, and a large part of his ministry was carried on in Judea. In the synoptics his human birth is given. In the fourth he is the pre-existent Logos or Word—co-existent with God—and as such descended to earth, and manifest in human form. In the synoptic Gospels Jesus is a man; he eats, sleeps, hungers, thirsts, grows weary, is tempted, grows in knowledge, shrinks from pain, is disappointed, prays, even loses temporarily his vision of God, is limited in knowledge and power—goes through the world ever as a man among men. True, he is represented as having had a miraculous birth. But men in that age thought Plato and Alexander and Augustus Cæsar miraculously born. He is represented as working miracles. But miracle-working was regarded as common. He is represented as rising from the dead. But so had Samuel and Moses and Elijah risen from the dead, and they were only men.

But when we pass on to the fourth Gospel we are in a wholly different atmosphere. Jesus is no longer a man. He descends into the world from above, a mysterious being, not quite God, but much more than man; and he walks through the world as a being from another sphere. His whole manner of teaching is different. In the synoptic Gospels he everywhere teaches in parables, and in brief and concise sentences. In the fourth Gospel there

is not a parable; and in place of the crystal-clear short sentences, each so brief and sharp and fresh and full of meaning that nobody can ever forget them, he everywhere speaks in long sentences, and elaborate, mystical, metaphysical discourses.

In short, the whole fourth Gospel shows that it was composed with a doctrinal purpose in view. It is not a mere narrative, written without bias, to tell simply what Jesus did and said. It is a plea, an argument, a document written to show that Jesus was the Incarnate Word of God.

This great difference between the fourth Gospel and the others is one of the strong reasons why so many unbiased scholars find it impossible to believe that it could have been written by an apostle, and are so generally disposed to regard it as the production of a later age, when the simple humanity of Jesus had become exalted into something superhuman. Indeed, one of the most important achievements of biblical criticism is that of the discovery of the order, approximate dates, and relations to each other of the Gospels and other writings of the New Testament, by means of which we are able to trace the changing conception of Jesus from its simplest form in Mark through the successive elaborations and exaltations that it takes on, to some extent in Matthew and Luke, but more still in the Epistles, to its climax in the fourth Gospel. True, it has not yet reached the height of deity; the journey of Jesus from man to God does not end until the Council of Nicea in the year 325; but by the time the fourth Gospel is written it is far advanced.

It must not, however, be understood that this view of the origin of the fourth Gospel casts aside the Gospel as

of little value. Far from that. It simply *changes* its value, making that value primarily ethical and spiritual instead of historical. While it holds that the facts of Jesus' life are so idealized in these pages as to lose much of their reliability as history, it recognizes here a deeper and richer appreciation of the *spirit* of his life and teachings than perhaps in either of the synoptics, or probably, indeed, than in any other New Testament book.

A Legendary Element in the Gospels.—In the light of the scholarship of our time, it has to be confessed that there is a legendary element in the Gospels, just as we have found that there are legends in various parts of the Old Testament. Not a few of the Gospel miracle-stories are undoubtedly legends. For example, that exceptionally interesting group of wonder-stories which gathers about the birth of Jesus, as similar tales have gathered around the birth of so many other great characters of history. Indeed, these birth-stories of our Evangelists are almost precisely the same as those that we find in Buddhistic literature haloing the birth of Gautama.

An interesting thing about our Gospel birth-stories is that we are able to detect them in the very process, as it were, of their legendary growth; and by this means we get proof that, instead of being a part of the real events of the life of Jesus, they almost certainly attached themselves to the Gospel records late, at a time which we can approximately fix. To see this we have only to open our Bibles. Turning to the beginning of Mark, our earliest Gospel, we find not one of these birth-stories of Jesus there. Passing on to the later records, Matthew and Luke, we find them all. The inference seems inevitable that when Mark's Gospel was written they were not yet in existence; but by the time the two later Gospels

are compiled they have come into being and have found general credence, as such wonder-stories easily do, and hence the editors of these two Gospels incorporate them into their narratives.

This well illustrates the growth of legends everywhere, and the thing to be borne particularly in mind is that everywhere, whether inside our Bible or outside, they go hand in hand with miracle. Stories of miracles may not always be legendary, but legends nearly or quite always take the form of the miraculous. Hence, just as in reading Buddhist or early Greek and Roman history, when we find miraculous stories, we at once set them down as legends, as historical criticism has taught us to do; so, in studying the Bible, New Testament or Old, when we find accounts of miraculous events, a sound biblical criticism teaches us always to ask the question, and with great thoroughness and care, Are they not legendary? It has come to be an axiom of historical criticism that the presence of a miraculous element in any story or record, while it may not condemn the story or the record, at least casts suspicion upon it. A narrative thus on its face open to suspicion can be accepted as historic only after the fullest investigation and upon the strongest evidence.

We may hesitate to confess the presence of a legendary element in the Gospels for fear it may impair their credibility, and hence weaken the foundations of faith in Christ. But such a position is unworthy of an honest investigator of truth. Indeed, to take it is virtually to confess that truth may not be safe. Says Dr. Frederick H. Hedge:

"Every historic religion that has won for itself a place in the world's history has evolved from a core of fact a

nimbus of legendary matter which criticism cannot always separate, and which the popular faith does not seek to separate. . . . Christianity, like every other religion, has its mythology,—a mythology so intertwined with the veritable facts of its early history, so braided and welded with its first beginnings, that history and myth are not always distinguishable the one from the other. . . . Yet the mythical interpretation of certain portions of the Gospels has no appreciable bearing on the character of Christ. The impartial reader of the record must see that the evangelists did not invent that character; they did not make the Jesus of their story; on the contrary, it was he that made them. It is a true saying that only a Christ could invent a Christ."[1]

The Reliability of the Gospel Records.—The verdict of competent scholarship is unequivocal and unanimous that these Gospel records are human, and, as human, contain human imperfections. They display no omniscience on the part of their writers or their compilers; how, then, can they be free from errors? And yet, while scholarship denies their inerrancy, just as emphatically it affirms their worth, their honesty, their general credibility. Many lines of evidence converge to establish these. Gibbon and Bancroft may be in error, not infrequently are in error, as to individual statements of fact in their histories; but as to the general story of the fall of Rome and that of the American Revolution, as set forth by them, there is no room for question. So, in these Gospel records, there may be and are errors as to fact—legendary accretions, human

[1] "Ways of the Spirit," pp. 319, 338. The whole chapter ("The Mythical Element in the New Testament") is full of thought, and will well repay perusal by any who care to understand how independent is moral and spiritual truth of its setting or form of expression.

imperfections of one kind and another—but as to the great central matters with which they have to do, the evidence is strong and convincing that they are trustworthy. Regarding the miraculous voice speaking at the Jordan baptism, or the words of the inscription upon the cross, the records may err; but they can hardly err about the existence of Jesus, or about the central facts of his life and death. There may be ground for question whether this or that particular utterance purporting to have come from his lips is actually his, or only the creation of a reporter's memory, dimmed by the lapse of a quarter or third of a century since the Master spoke. But if historical and literary criticism are to be trusted at all, there can be no reasonable question about the few great, simple, central truths, which, according to all the records, formed the burden of his teaching, and which he not only burned into the very souls of all who heard him, but lifted as eternal stars into the sky of the world's hope and faith—such truths as God's Fatherhood, man's brotherhood, the Golden Rule as a practical guide for life, the duty of love and forgiveness to enemies, the duty of sympathy and pity for the poor, the suffering and the sinning, the certainty of retribution, the identity of the kingdom of God with love and goodness, the divineness and immortality of the human soul.[1] That these were his great central teach-

[1] Persons desiring to investigate further the important subjects considered in this chapter, are referred to Keim's "Jesus of Nazara," vol. i.; Davidson's "Introduction to the New Testament" (Gospels); "Protestant Commentary on the New Testament" (Introduction to the Gospels); Strauss' "New Life of Jesus," vol. i., pp. 47–194 (Gospel Sources); Carpenter's "Synoptic Gospels"; Barrow's "Regni Evangelium"; Cone's "Gospel-Criticism and Historical Christianity"; Westcott's "Introduction to the Study of the Gospels"; Renan's "Gospels"; Bernhard Weiss' "Manual of Introduction to the New Testament"; Baring-Gould's "Lost and Hostile

ings we are as certain as that he lived; and of that no competent scholar to-day has any doubt.

Gospels"; Martineau's "Seat of Authority" (chapters on the Gospels); Crooker's "Jesus Brought Back," and "Different New Testament Views of Jesus"; E. A. Abbott's article "Gospels" in Encyclopædia Britannica; Schürer on the fourth Gospel (*Contemporary Review*, September, 1891); Ezra Abbot and J. F. Clarke on same; Chadwick's "Bible of To-day," lec. viii.; Pfleiderer's "Development of Theology in Germany," bk. iii., chap. i.

CHAPTER XII.

PAUL AND THE BOOK OF ACTS.

In advancing from the Gospels to the other New Testament books, we pass from a study of Jesus and his teaching to a study of the teaching and work of his followers. We have seen the foundations of the Christian edifice laid; it is in order to inquire next how the earliest builders proceeded to erect the walls.

We come first to a historical book called the Acts of the Apostles, which takes up the Christian story where the Gospels lay it down, and carries it on for about forty years, until congregations of believers in Jesus and his doctrine have been established not only all up and down Palestine, but in many of the more important cities of the surrounding countries. In addition to the old names of the men and women associated with Jesus in the Gospel narratives, we come now upon the names of new workers, some of them very conspicuous. By far the most important of these is Saul of Tarsus, called Paul. Indeed, next to Jesus himself, Paul is the most prominent and influential character connected with the establishment of Christianity and the production of the New Testament. We shall understand better both the Book of Acts, and the group of Epistles from his pen which follow the Acts, if we pause here a moment to get a connected view of his life.

The Apostle Paul.—Paul seems never to have known or even seen Jesus in the flesh, though he could not have

been very much younger than Jesus, and was educated in Jerusalem. He was of an ardent and impetuous nature, and not long after the crucifixion (perhaps within two years) began to be conspicuous as a persecutor of the little companies of believers in Christ that were gathering not only in Jerusalem but in many other places. The same zeal which made him afterward such an efficient missionary of Christianity now caused him to carry his persecutions of the hated sect of the "Nazarenes" beyond Jerusalem to the cities and villages of Judea, and finally even beyond the bounds of Palestine. It was while he was on his way to the city of Damascus, a little way outside of Palestine on the northeast, bent on extirpating the new heresy there, that the remarkable event occurred which changed his whole life. It is evident that he had been greatly impressed by the steadfastness and piety of the men and women whom he had been dragging to torture and death; nor could he get rid of the profound impression which the life and teachings and heroic martyrdom of Jesus had made upon him, as he had learned more and more about them. As the great city came into view where his work of cruelty and death was so soon to begin again, he was overpowered by what is described as a vision—a light brighter than the sun—and a voice speaking out of it, saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? I am Jesus of Nazareth whom thou persecutest." The nature of this vision need not be discussed here. It is enough that as the result of it Paul's whole career was changed. From the most zealous enemy he became the most ardent advocate and propagandist of the Christian faith.

He first became conspicuous among the Christians at Antioch, the rich and populous capital of Syria, where a

mixed Christian community of Jews and Gentiles had gradually been formed. Here he preached, and from this city as his headquarters he went out on preaching tours through various parts of Syria and Cilicia.

Division in the Church.—It was here, at Antioch, that arose the first great problem which agitated and divided the early Christian Church. Was Christianity for the Jews only, or was it for the Gentiles too? And if it was for the Gentiles, must they come into it through the door of Judaism—that is, through circumcision and obedience to the Jewish ceremonial and moral law? These questions became urgent first at Antioch, but soon in many other places also, for not only there but elsewhere others besides Jews were accepting the new faith; and how were they to be treated? Paul from the beginning took the broadest ground. He said the death of Jesus on the cross inaugurated a new covenant between God and man, taking the place of and doing away with the old covenant established on Mount Sinai. In this new covenant the Law was annulled; *faith* was the only condition of salvation, and the distinction between Jew and Gentile was removed. To the Jewish Christians generally this seemed very extreme and radical ground, and it was not strange that a division arose. They saw in Jesus simply the Jewish Messiah; but Paul proclaimed him to be the Saviour of the whole world. They said to converts that in order to obtain a place in the new Messianic kingdom they must submit to circumcision, and obey the command of the Jewish law regarding meats, the Sabbath, etc. But Paul said no, the only requisite for admission was faith in Christ, and hearts pure before God. It was not long before the parent church in Jerusalem began to perceive the danger that was arising, and

sent messengers to Antioch with the demand that the Gentile Christians should submit to the requirements of the Law, raising the watchword "Circumcision." The contention grew serious. With the hope of finding some way of settling the difficulty, Paul, taking with him Barnabas and Titus as companions, set out for Jerusalem. There he laid the whole matter before Peter, John, and James, who were at the head of the Jerusalem church. A settlement for the time being was reached, though the Jerusalem apostles were not convinced. They would devote themselves to missionary work among the Jews: Paul might work among the Gentiles, and they would not disturb him even if he did *not* insist upon the circumcision of his converts. On the basis of this understanding they gave to Paul the hand of fellowship, and he returned to Antioch, happy over the results of his journey.

But the difficulty was not really settled. Paul's view of the new religious movement, and the view held by James, Peter, and John, were far apart. All held in common that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah, who would soon return to establish his kingdom. But the Jerusalem apostles saw in the new faith little more than an advanced Judaism (Judaism with its Messianic hope fulfilled), while to Paul it was Judaism transformed into a universal religion. This radical difference of view was destined to continue and to produce serious divisions among the churches for two or three generations. And to Paul it was destined to bring opposition and enmity, trouble and sorrow, all his life. To understand this is to have a key to much that otherwise is inexplicable both in the Book of Acts and in the Epistles of Paul—indeed, in all the last half of the New Testament. All

his life Paul devoted himself with tireless zeal to the work of preaching Christ, and establishing and caring for churches in Asia Minor, in Cyprus, in Macedonia, in Greece, in Rome. The history of this activity is found partly in the Acts and partly in his Epistles.

The Acts of the Apostles.—This book claims, in its opening verse, the same authorship as the Gospel of Luke. This claim is supported by the style of the writer, and by the general view which he takes of the Christian movement, as well as by ancient ecclesiastical tradition.

The death of Jesus occurs in the year 30 A.D. The Book of Acts takes up the Gospel narrative here, and continues it on to the year 64, near the time of the death of St. Paul at Rome. This is probably the reason why the collectors of the New Testament writings placed the book between the Gospels and the Epistles of St. Paul, instead of far over toward the end of the canon, where it would properly belong if put in the order of its composition.

The work naturally divides into two parts. The first, extending from the beginning to chapter ix., verse 30, gives an account of the spread of the Gospel and the establishment of the Church in Palestine. The second part, which is considerably longer than the first, extending from chapter ix. 30 to the end of the book, traces the spread of the Christian movement through Western Asia, then to Europe, and finally to the capital city of the Roman Empire. In the first part, that dealing with the extension of the Gospel in Palestine, the Apostle Peter is the leading character; in the second part, that which has to do with the carrying of Christianity to the Gentiles, St. Paul overshadows all others.

It is noticeable that, as a history, the book is far from

complete. While some things of little or no importance are given in great detail, other things of great importance are sketched in the barest outline, or omitted altogether. Can we in any way find out the motive which governs the author in his inclusions and exclusions? In other words, does the book have a purpose other than that of simple narration? And, if so, can we discover what it is? These questions have been the subject of a great deal of controversy. The Tübingen school of critics, in Germany, have written with great power in support of the idea that the book was composed with the distinct purpose of putting out of sight as fully as possible the serious division which so long existed among the early Christians, and bringing the Jewish Christian and Gentile Christian parties together into one harmonious Catholic Church. Thus, events showing the estrangement are generally left unnoticed, and those looking in the direction of fraternity and co-operation are emphasized. It is urged that this is carried so far sometimes as quite to distort the real history. Thus Paul, who was the leader of the Gentile Christian party, and, as such, was opposed and bitterly persecuted all through his career by the Jewish Christians, is in the Acts represented as working in closest amity with Peter, the leader of the opposite party. The two apostles are represented as of equal rank, and as being held in equal esteem by all. Indeed, from some of the narratives we should almost or quite think that Paul and Peter had changed places and characters. Peter, and not Paul, is represented as the one who takes the first step in the conversion of the Gentiles. Into Peter's mouth, not Paul's, is put that remarkable utterance, as broad as anything in the New Testament: "God is no respecter of persons; but in

every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him." It is Peter, and not Paul, that goes up from Joppa to Jerusalem to plead with the apostles and brethren there in favor of throwing open all the privileges of Christianity to the Gentiles on equal terms with the Jews. On the other hand, Paul is represented as accepting a portion of the Jewish Law as binding upon the Gentile Christian communities; he himself keeps the Mosaic law strictly; he circumcises the son of a Greek because his mother was a Jewess; he considers himself as bound to keep the Jewish festivals; he takes upon himself the Jewish vow of a Nazarite; he represents himself to the Jews as a believer in the Scriptures, in the old sense, and as a Pharisee; and he is represented always, even to the very last, as preaching first to the Jews in whatsoever place he was.

Now all this, say Baur and Zeller, is a very different picture from that which Paul draws for us in his Epistles —*so* different, indeed, that the two cannot be reconciled. What answer shall we make? Scholarship to-day is not fully sustaining the Tübingen critics; it is convicting them of going too far, of exaggerating, of making difficulties that do not exist. At the same time it has to be confessed that much in their position stands firm against every effort to overthrow it. The more thorough the investigation, the more clear it becomes that the Book of Acts *is* a "tendency-writing." It has another aim besides that of simple narration. It has a case to make out. Its pictures of the relations existing between Peter and Paul, or between the Jewish Christians on the one side and the Gentile Christians on the other, are not always the same as those found in Paul's Epistles, nor even always reconcilable therewith. The book has to be read with

these facts in view. This done, it takes its place as a work of great historic as well as religious value. But if the bias be unrecognized, the book becomes at many points misleading.

It is of some importance to notice that this book, as well as the earlier work from the same hand (Luke's Gospel), is at least to some extent a compilation. It is believed that there are traces of several documents to be found in it. One is very clearly observable. At several points in the second half of the book, as we read along, we suddenly find our narrator, without any warning, changing from the use of the third person to that of the first person plural, "we." It is generally agreed by critics that the portions in which this "we" is used are a document, in the nature of a diary of travel, which the compiler has inserted into his narrative.[1]

The date of the Book of Acts is not easy to ascertain. Scholars differ much concerning it. Some whose judgment is of much worth (as Meyer) name the year 80 A.D. Others would carry it on to 130, or later. But these are extreme positions. The probability seems strong that it was produced between 85 and 100 A.D. Perhaps this is as much as can be said with safety. The place of composition was very likely Rome.

[1] Chaps. xvi. 10–17; xx. 4–15; xxi. 1–18; xxvii. 1–xxviii. 16.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE EPISTLES OF PAUL.[1]

NEXT to the Gospels, the most important group of writings in the New Testament consists of the Epistles of St. Paul. Just how many we ought to count as belonging to this group cannot be told with certainty. Fourteen Epistles are popularly connected with Paul's name, but that this number is wrong all scholars agree. Nobody disputes that four are his; namely, Romans, First and Second Corinthians, and Galatians; and that to these, three others—First Thessalonians, Philippians, and Philemon—ought to be added, comparatively few scholars doubt. Regarding Colossians, Ephesians, and Second Thessalonians, critics are about evenly divided. That First and Second Timothy and Titus are from a later hand is well-nigh certain, while Hebrews no scholar today thinks of mentioning in connection with Paul.

Paul's Epistles are particularly valuable for three reasons. First, they are our earliest New Testament writings, being all of them older than our oldest Gospel. Secondly, we know their author (with the limitations just named), while the authors of most of the New Testament books we do not know. Thirdly, their writer,

[1] The headings of this chapter and the next are not strictly correct. Some of the Epistles considered here are almost certainly non-Pauline. The Pauline and the non-Pauline Epistles cannot be grouped separately, with exactness, without departing from the *order* followed in the New Testament.

though not one of the Twelve, may properly be called the greatest of the apostles.

Paul was the great missionary of the early Church. Indeed, he wrote his Epistles as a part of his missionary activity. Wishing to instruct or admonish or encourage or comfort a church of believers whom he had gathered together in some distant place, whom he loved but could not at present visit, he wrote them a letter warm with the message that was in his heart. Thus, as the years went on, the letters, written here and there, to meet the urgent needs that arose, multiplied. Not all that he wrote are preserved. But enough remain to give us a very clear insight into the life, the religious views, the motives and aims, as well as the joys and sorrows, the conflicts and triumphs, the qualities—some of them peccable enough, but some in the highest degree splendid and noble—of the great Apostle to the Gentiles, the man whose genius, profound spiritual insight, and dauntless courage prevented Christianity from narrowing and hardening into a mere Jewish sect, and started it on its great career as a world-religion.

Of the seven undoubtedly genuine Epistles of Paul the true chronological order is probably as follows: First Thessalonians, Galatians, First and Second Corinthians, Romans, Philemon, Philippians. I shall consider them, however, in the order in which they stand in the New Testament.

The Epistle to the Romans, taken all in all, is the most important of Paul's writings. Perhaps this is the reason why it has been placed first in our canon. It was written in Corinth, probably in the year 58 A.D. Paul has not at this time been in Rome, but is about setting his face in that direction. Accordingly he writes this letter

and sends it in advance to prepare the way for his coming. Already a considerable Christian community has been established in that great centre of the western world, and it is natural that he should crave a friendly reception among them. How may he insure it, since he has reason to believe that many of the Jewish Christians there are strictly attached to the Law, and are hostile to that broader view which he preaches? He resolves upon the frank and bold course of writing them a long letter, stating fully his position and the reasons why he holds it, and explaining and justifying his missionary work among the Gentiles. This is what he does in this Epistle. We have here not only the fullest statement of Paul's doctrinal views which he anywhere gives us, but it is written out after his thought has reached a late and ripe stage.

The Epistle falls naturally into several divisions. But these need not be pointed out. It is enough to notice that there is some doubt among scholars about the genuineness of the fifteenth chapter, and a good deal about that of the sixteenth.

First and Second Corinthians.—Corinth was a rich and corrupt city. Paul labored a year and a half there, and established an important church. But its members did not wholly escape the temptations that surrounded them. Various immoralities and serious religious dissensions arose among them, which grieved the apostle greatly. As a result, he writes two long and earnest letters, exhorting them to put away from among themselves every kind of sin, and to heal their divisions, following neither him nor any other disciple but only Jesus. Several chapters, particularly the twelfth, thirteenth, and fifteenth in the first Epistle, on spiritual gifts, charity, and the Resurrection, rank in ethical and spiritual

quality with the very best of Paul's writings. The subscriptions to the Epistles say that they were written at Philippi. In the case of the second this may be correct, though there are some doubts about it. But in the case of the first it is almost certainly a mistake, the place of authorship being probably Ephesus. As to time, perhaps all that can be said is that the Epistles were written about the year 57 or 58 A.D. They seem to have been preceded by another Epistle to the Corinthians which has not been preserved. The genuineness of the two we have is undoubted.

The Epistle to the Galatians was probably written by Paul from Ephesus, about the year 56 A.D. This was perhaps two years and a half after his establishment of the Christian communities among the Galatians, to whom he writes. The occasion of the Epistle is the lapse of these communities into a narrow, Judaistic form of Christianity, caused by the coming among them of advocates of the narrower view. The Epistle is a stanch defence of Paul's broader and more spiritual faith. Perhaps no other New Testament writing reveals to us so clearly the difference between Paul's conception of Christianity and that of the Jewish Christian party who followed the leadership of James, Peter, and John and the church at Jerusalem.

The Epistle to the Ephesians is a battle-field of New Testament scholarship. The genuineness of this Epistle began to be doubted only in recent times, but the doubt has extended to such scholars as Schleiermacher, De Wette, F. C. Baur, Schwegler, Ewald, Hilgenfeld, Davidson, Holtzmann, and many others—authorities whose judgment cannot be ignored. Professor Holtzmann gives the following reasons for believing the Epistle not to be

Paul's: (1) The Epistle addresses itself to a purely Gentile Christian public. Paul would not have made such a mistake, for he had preached much and spent much time in Ephesus, and knew that there was an important Jewish Christian element there. (2) The Epistle betrays no acquaintance between the writer and the readers, whereas Paul's acquaintance among the Ephesian Christians was intimate. (3) The writer sends no greetings; but if Paul had been writing to friends and brethren he would have sent many, as he does in all his Epistles. (4) The Epistle is entirely devoted to the promotion of the unity of the Christian Church, on the ground of the unity of God's plan of salvation, which embraces the whole human world, and which is contrasted with the previous division of humanity into Jews and Gentiles. But this is not the language of one who is engaged in the very heat of a battle to gain a place for the Gentiles in the Church. (5) The writer of this Epistle refers to "the apostles" as a third party to which he does not belong—something which Paul would not have done. (6) The language and style of this Epistle are not those of Paul. The Epistle is smooth and redundant; Paul is terse. Above all, it employs many peculiar terms, words, and figures of speech which are foreign to Paul as we judge of him by his well-known writings. (7) Some of its leading ideas are not in harmony with those of Paul. For example, the doctrine of the residence of evil spirits in the air, and the fundamental idea of the Epistle itself—that Christianity is a mystery concealed in God from eternity. (8) The Epistle reveals all through it the atmosphere of Gnostic thought, in the frequent use of such words and expressions as "all wisdom and prudence," "making known," "revealing," "hearing," "learning," "knowl-

edge," "mystery," "fullness," "æons," "generations," "lords of creation"—expressions which the Gnostic literature of the second century is full of. This Gnostic thought obtrudes itself into the Christology of the Epistle, carrying it far beyond the Pauline limits. In the place of the "second Adam," who exists for the sake of the human world, it puts a being existing before the world, who is at the same time the central point and end of the whole created world, and in whom, therefore, the earthly and the heavenly spheres alike first reach their articulate yet harmonious unity. This is not Paul, but the Gnosticism of the century after his death.

Such is a brief summary of Holtzmann's reasons for attributing this Epistle to a later hand than Paul's. Certainly the Christology which we find here is very far removed from that of the synoptic Gospels, as it is also far removed from that of the early and certainly genuine Epistles of Paul. We are here approaching the Logos doctrine of the fourth Gospel. Christ is yet distinctly subordinate to God, but he is lifted far above humanity.

Perhaps all we can do is to leave the Epistle in the list of those whose genuineness is simply doubtful. If we cannot be sure (as perhaps we cannot) that Paul did not write it, we certainly cannot be sure that he did write it. If he wrote it, it was doubtless while he was at Rome, near or during the year 63 A.D. But if he wrote it he was much changed from the Paul of earlier years. If it came from some other hand than Paul's its date is probably late—100 A.D. or after. Davidson thinks it was written between 130 and 140 A.D. But he does not for this reason esteem the Epistle lightly. He says: "It was evidently the work of a thoughtful Christian, far-seeing,

comprehensive in the range of his ideas, possessed of a high inspiration. Compared with the Epistle to the Colossians, it is certainly inferior; viewed by itself it claims a leading place among the canonical Epistles. The school of Paul produced none equal to himself, but it gave rise to men of large sympathies—some choice spirits on whom the mantle of the departed may be said to have fallen. . . . The writer's object [in this Epistle] was to hold up to the view of the Ephesians a universal Church of which they were a part—a Church constituting the fullness of Christ, and one with him." [1]

The Epistle to the Philippians is probably the latest of Paul's writings. It appears to have been written while he was in Rome as a prisoner, A.D. 62 or 63. Its genuineness has been questioned, principally on the ground that some of its passages seem to have a Gnostic flavor. Still, the weight of scholarship is undoubtedly in favor of its Pauline authorship. It is the shortest Epistle addressed to any church, except the doubtful Second Thessalonians. As to matter, it is partly doctrinal and partly practical, but the doctrinal and the practical portions are not kept separate.

The Epistle to the Colossians is of doubtful authorship. If it is Paul's, it was probably written at Rome, in the year 62 A.D. The principal reasons for doubting Paul's connection with it are three: (1) The similarity which exists between this Epistle and that to the Ephesians, causing many scholars to believe that one is derived from the other; (2) the fact that it contains sentiments which savor of heresies (as Gnosticism and Montanism) which did not arise until after Paul's death; (3)

[1] "Introduction to the New Testament," vol. ii., p. 225, 2d ed.

peculiarities of style and use of unusual words not found in Paul's undoubted writings.[1]

If the Epistle is not from Paul it is probably late. Davidson thinks it originated in Asia Minor, about 120 A.D. A conservative date is 100 A.D.

It may be divided into two parts, the first (chapters i. and ii.) chiefly doctrinal, and the second (chapters iii. and iv.) practical.

First and Second Thessalonians.—Of the *first* of these Epistles the genuineness is clear. It is the earliest production that we have from the hand of Paul; and that means that it is the oldest written document of Christianity. It was composed, probably, during the year 53 or 54 A.D., and most likely at Corinth, not at Athens as the subscription in our common version says. Its contents are not particularly remarkable: the first part is a defence against the apostle's opponents; the second is affectionately personal; the third and last is hortatory and didactic.

The genuineness of the *second* Epistle is very widely doubted. Its style is distinctly different from that of the first; its contents seem in part to imitate and in part to contradict those of the genuine Epistle. If from Paul it was written about 54 A.D.; if not from Paul its date may be the year 70 A.D.

First and Second Timothy, and Titus.—These are commonly known as the Pastoral Epistles, because they consist mainly of instructions for pastoral work. Though popularly associated with Paul's name, much very careful scholarship is agreed in denying Paul's authorship, and

[1] The reasons given on a preceding page for doubting the Pauline authorship of the Epistle to the Ephesians apply in almost every particular to the Epistle to the Colossians.

in assigning them to the early part of the second century, say to the decade 100–110 A.D., or later. There are good reasons for believing that the Epistle known as Second Timothy is really the oldest, and that the one known as First Timothy is the latest, while that to Titus falls between the other two; though the difference between the ages of the three is not great. Probably all were written by the same person. That called Second Timothy is believed by Weiss, Hausrath, Pfleiderer, Ewald, Davidson, and others to contain brief genuine fragments from Paul.

The reasons for holding that these Epistles are, in the main, post-Pauline are too numerous, intricate, and technical for statement here. Suffice it to say that they are believed to be valid by a large number of very eminent New Testament scholars, including not only those just named, but such others as De Wette, Meyer, Hilgenfeld, Holtzmann, Lücke, Neander, and Bleek.

As to the authorship and aim of the three Epistles, Davidson says: "We rest in the conclusion that the author was a Pauline Christian who lived at Rome in the first part of the second century, and wished to confirm the incipient Catholic Church in the old paths, by exhortations to piety, and warnings against error. His view was polemical only in part. To the growing dangers of the time he opposed the orthodox doctrine of the Church, and a well-ordered ecclesiastical organization. . . . Like many others of his day, the author chose the name of an apostle to give currency to his sentiments. In all this there was no dishonesty. The device was a harmless one."

The Epistle to Philemon was probably written by Paul, though a few critics of candor and standing think

to the contrary. Its date we may pretty confidently set down as the year 62 A.D., and its place of composition as Rome. As it is the shortest, so it is the least important of the extant Epistles of the great apostle. It has often been called the slaveholder's Epistle. Whether or not we ought to condemn Paul's conduct in sending back a slave to his master under the very peculiar circumstances, certain it is that the Epistle has been largely used in justification of the terrible sin of slavery.[1]

---

[1] Perhaps our study of Paul and the writings ascribed to him ought not to conclude without mention of a very radical and revolutionary theory which is attracting attention in some quarters. One of its leading exponents is Prof. W. C. Van Manen of the University of Leyden, Holland. It has been given some currency in this country and England by Professor Van Manen's advocacy of it in his articles on "Paul," "Philemon," "Philippians" and "Romans" in the Encyclopædia Biblica. The theory, stated in a few words, is, that none of the Epistles of the New Testament usually ascribed to Paul are really from Paul, but were written by others in his name sometime during the second century, in other words, that these Epistles instead of being the earliest writings of the New Testament, produced before any of the Gospels, are actually late productions, originating half a century or more after the Gospels, and portraying a distinctly later stage in the development of Christian thought. A number of reasons are given for this view, of which the strongest are perhaps these two: (1) that in the Book of Acts the principal theme of Paul's preaching is represented as being "the things concerning Jesus," whereas in these Epistles hardly an event in the life of Jesus except his death, and scarcely a word of his teaching, is ever mentioned; and (2) that the theological questions which form the main subject-matter of the Epistles were all questions which did not arise for consideration and discussion until the second century. For a more full presentation of Van Manen's view, see the above mentioned articles in the Encyclopædia Biblica; also chapter xiii. in Newton Mann's "The Evolution of a Great Literature," 1905.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE NON-PAULINE EPISTLES AND THE REVELATION.

The Epistle to the Hebrews.—The later Greek and Latin manuscripts ascribe this Epistle to St. Paul, as does our Authorized Version; but the older manuscripts do not. The Western Church of the early centuries did not accept it as Pauline, and it had difficulty in getting into the New Testament Canon. Says Luther: "That the Epistle to the Hebrews is neither from the hand of St. Paul, nor of any other apostle, is proved by ii. 3. . . . It is evident that it is the work of an excellent and learned man, who was a disciple of the apostles and had learnt much of them, and who also had experience in the faith, and skill in the Scriptures." Scholarship since Luther has confirmed his judgment and that of the early Church. Davidson says: "The Pauline authorship has been given up by every scholar except Hofmann." Who the author was can only be conjectured. Some have thought Barnabas, some Luke, some Silas, some Clement of Rome, some Apollos. The last name is the suggestion of Luther, and the tendency among scholars now is to accept it as the most probable of any.

As to the date of the Epistle, there has been a wide agreement that it must be fixed as anterior to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. But this view is losing ground. Perhaps the consensus of scholarship now favors the decade 75–85 A.D. Harnack says 81–96.

To whom was the Epistle written? Many have thought, to the Hebrews of Palestine; but to this view there are insuperable objections. Hilgenfeld says, to the Hebrews of Alexandria, in Egypt, where there was a large Jewish population, among whom Christianity was introduced very early. Many considerations favor this view, among them the fact that Apollos was an Alexandrian Jew. Perhaps this view has best support.

The Epistle is a powerful one, hardly falling below any production of Paul in strength of logic, earnestness, or eloquence; but its leading characteristics of style and thought are far removed from those of Paul. Up to the nineteenth verse of the tenth chapter, the Epistle is doctrinal; the rest is hortatory. The object of the writer is to conciliate the Jewish Christians and lead them to a larger view of the new faith. To do this he argues that the Old Covenant was but a shadow of the New; Judaism, with its law and its temple, was but a prototype of Christianity; the Jewish priesthood was only a type and prophecy of Christ, the eternal high priest. The Christology of the Epistle is elaborate and advanced.

The Epistle of James.—If this book was written by any one of the three James's mentioned in the New Testament, it was probably the one spoken of as "the Lord's brother."[1] Did it come from him? There seem to be strong reasons for answering yes. And yet it must be confessed that there seem also to be some reasons for answering no. On the whole, the authorship of the Epistle may be set down as uncertain. It was not until

[1] Gal. i. 19. See Josephus's "Antiquities," bk. xx. chap. ix.

the last half of the fourth century that it was given a place in the Canon; and there has hardly been an age since, that has been free from deniers of its right to be there. Luther wrote of it: "It is an Epistle of straw in comparison with them (the Epistles of Paul, Peter, and John), for it has nothing evangelical about it." "Methinks it must have been some good, pious man that took some sayings of the disciples of the apostles and put them down on paper." It is certain that its teaching departs widely from Paul's; whether it contradicts it or only supplements it, is a question which different New Testament students answer in different ways. Davidson says: "It breathes a healthy spirit, and presents views of life that are eminently Christian. Its practical tone is a preservative against the Pauline element in excess. . . . It contradicts the apostle of the Gentiles in relation to the doctrine of justification. But it is a valuable letter, notwithstanding, because dogmatic does not constitute the essence of Christianity, which has an ethical side as important as the speculative." Perhaps the most remarkable thing about it is the fact that it says so little about Christ, not even mentioning his death or resurrection. Yet its teachings remind one forcibly of those of Jesus, being rich in that ethical quality which we find everywhere in his sayings and parables.

As a literary production the Epistle is of a high order. It language is vivid, choice, rhetorical, often poetical.

If this letter was not written by James, the brother of Jesus, its date is probably 85–95 A.D. (Harnack surprises us by saying 120–140). If it is from Jesus' brother, it can hardly have been written later than 50 A.D.

The First and Second Epistles of Peter.—Many New

Testament scholars of eminence believe the *first* of these Epistles to be the production of the Apostle Peter, in accordance with ancient tradition, and with the claim of the Epistle itself. This view is now much doubted, however; indeed the weight of present scholarship is probably against it. The Epistle purports to have been written in Babylon; but this name is doubtless used here, as in the Book of Revelation, as a mystical designation for Rome. Everything indicates that Rome was the real place of its composition. If Peter was the writer, then its date must be fixed at about the year 64 A.D., during the Neronian persecution. But there is a growing feeling that this date cannot be reconciled with the contents of the Epistle itself. In the first place, the Epistle seems at many points to betray, on the part of its author, a familiarity with, if not a dependence upon, the Pauline Epistles, the Epistle of James, that to the Hebrews, and the Book of Revelation. This would necessitate for it a date subsequent to the composition of these works. Still more decisive is the fact that the Epistle assumes a universal persecution of the Christians throughout the Roman Empire, if not throughout the world—a condition of things which carries us on far beyond the persecution instigated by Nero (which was only local, and confined to Rome), to the reign of Trajan. Scholars who adopt this view fix the date of the Epistle at about the year 113 A.D. Says Hilgenfeld: "We must conclude that the Epistle was written by a Roman Christian, in the time of Trajan, in the name of the Apostle Peter, whose name was so celebrated in Rome, and that it was intended to strengthen all Christendom, but especially the most oppressed communities of Asia." He also points out, as do other writers, how few of the peculiar views and characteristics

of Peter appear in the Epistle. Harnack places its date between 81 and 96 A.D.

Passing to the *Second* Epistle of Peter we find still fewer evidences of genuineness. There was much doubt concerning it in the ancient Church. Distinguished men like Origen and Eusebius did not believe the letter was from Peter. There is also strong internal evidence against it. If we turn to the third chapter (verses 15 and 16), we find it speaking of the Epistles of Paul as scriptures on a par with "the other scriptures" (iii. 15, 16). This passage alone makes it clear that the Epistle was written long after Peter's death, for not until post-apostolic times did Paul's writings come to be regarded as scriptures. Moreover, the Epistle strongly condemns certain false doctrines, which, as we examine them, we discover to be the free-thinking Gnosticism of the second century. These are a few of the many indications of the late date of this Epistle. There is a very wide agreement among the best scholars that we have here the *latest* New Testament writing. Its date cannot be earlier than 150 A.D.; Harnack thinks it 160. The place of composition was probably Rome.

Says Davidson: "The leading ideas of both Petrine Epistles are Pauline. . . . Paulinism and Petrinism meet. Faith and works together are the keynote, without one-sided prominence of either. The spirit of both Epistles is eclectic, mediating, catholic."

The First, Second, and Third Epistles of John.—The *first* of these Epistles is in every way superior to the other two. It has all the characteristics of the fourth Gospel, and was almost certainly written by the same author. The date that we must assign to it (which cannot be far removed from that of the Gospel) depends

upon whether we accept or reject the theory that it was written by the Apostle John. If we accept that theory, we must date our Epistle about 95 or 98 A.D.; or, if, with the growing tendency of scholarship, we reject it, we must carry the production of the Epistle forward to 100 or 110 A.D., or later still. Most of the arguments that bear upon the authorship or date of the one book hold good when applied to the other. The place of writing was probably Asia Minor. For purposes of spiritual edification, the Epistle, as well as the Gospel, stands at the very head of the New Testament literature.

Passing to the *Second* and *Third* Epistles, we make a perceptible descent. It is a question whether these writings are from the same hand as the First. They seem quite as much like compilations from the First, or feeble imitations of it, as like original compositions. The ancient Church was undecided as to whether they ought to have a place in the Canon, perhaps because their contents did not seem of sufficient importance, and perhaps because they had the appearance of being merely private letters. They were probably written in Asia Minor, and not long after the First Epistle.

The Epistle of Jude.—This book is one of the least important in the Bible. We cannot be quite certain which of the two Judes, or Judases, mentioned in the New Testament is here referred to. He is called the brother of James. But of which James? The probabilities are that it was the James who was a brother of Jesus, which would make this Jude Jesus' brother. There are strong reasons, however, for believing that the book was not actually written by Jude (by *either* Jude) or by any one of their generation, but by an unknown writer as late

as 100 or even 130 (Harnack), who, in accordance with a wide-spread practice of the time, sent out this production under a better known name than his own, in order to give it greater authority. The place of composition is unknown. It may have been Palestine. The right of the Epistle to a place in the Canon has been much questioned; it was admitted in the fourth century among other disputed works.

The Book of Revelation.—This book is often called, from its name in Greek, the *Apocalypse*, which means a revelation, or an uncovering. The title given it in our common English version is, "The Revelation of St. John the Divine;" but the words "the Divine" are not found in any old manuscript. The early Church generally regarded the book as the production of John, the disciple and companion of Christ. A few, however, doubted, and there have been many important doubters since. Erasmus, the great scholar of the Reformation, was one. Luther thought the book "neither apostolic nor prophetic," and declared that he "could find no reason for believing that it was set forth by the Holy Spirit."[1] Zwingli pronounced it "not a biblical book," that is, not properly belonging in the Canon. Many eminent modern scholars have taken the same ground. Upon one point scholars have come to be essentially agreed; namely, that if the Apostle John wrote the fourth Gospel, he did not write the Revelation: both cannot be from the same author.

It has been generally maintained that the date of the Revelation can be easily and accurately fixed. From chap. xi., verses 1–14, we learn that the Temple was still

[1] Preface to the Revelation, 1522.

standing at the time when the author wrote; hence he must have written as early as 70 A.D., which was the year in which that edifice was destroyed. Still further, in chap. xvii., verse 10, we read: "And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one *is*, and the other is not yet come;" which is taken to mean that when the writer lived, five emperors of Rome had fallen, the sixth was reigning, and the other had not yet come on the stage. Now the sixth emperor of Rome, it is affirmed, was Galba, who reigned only seven months, from June, 68 A.D., to January, 69. Hence the date of the book must fall within that short space of time.

All this seems very clear and conclusive, and the date 68 or 69 A.D. is the one that is generally adopted. And yet, when we look into matters closely, we find some very serious difficulties standing in the way of this date, if not of *any single* date. Indeed, with increasing study of the book, the evidence grows that it is a compilation, or at least that it underwent several revisions, the last one far on in the second century.

The theory which now seems likely to supersede all others is one given to the world in 1886 by Professor Harnack and Eberhard Vischer of Germany, which claims that the work is a Jewish apocalypse with Christian interpolations, set in a Christian frame. It is believed that no other theory removes so many difficulties as this, or makes the interpretation of the book so simple and intelligible. It accounts for the conflicting Judaic and Christian elements in the book, which hitherto have been so puzzling; as it does also for the fact that the different parts give so plain evidence of different dates. Says Dr. Martineau: "The Judaic groundwork owes part of its text to the zealot period of the first Jewish war, A.D. 66–70, and

part to a time about eight years later. The Christianized recension shows the hand of two editors—one, in Domitian's time, responsible for all the twenty-nine passages speaking about "the Lamb;" the other, belonging to Hadrian's reign, answerable for the letters to the churches, as well as for the introduction and conclusion of the whole work. It cannot, therefore, have been issued before 136 A.D., and is altogether post-apostolic."

Certain it is, the Book of Revelation is only one of a great number of apocalypses that were produced during the two centuries before and the two after Christ. One Jewish apocalypse, in many respects similar to this, we have in the Old Testament; namely, the Book of Daniel, written about 165 B.C. Others knocked for admission, some to the Old Testament and some to the New, but none were allowed to enter except these.

It is probably not too strong to say that nothing in the Bible, not even the imprecatory Psalms, or the cruelties of Joshua or the Judges, is further from the teachings of Jesus than some things found in this strange book. The portrait of the unpitying, destroying, vengeance-taking Christ drawn here, far better suits a Nero or a Satan. Writes Martineau: "How strange that we should ever have thought it possible for a personal attendant on the ministry of Jesus to write or edit a book mixing up fierce Messianic conflicts, in which, with the sword, the gory garment, the blasting flame, the rod of iron, as his emblems, he leads the war-march, and treads the wine-press of the wrath of God till the deluge of blood rises to the horses' bits, with the speculative Christology of the second century, without a memory of his life, a feature of his look, a word from his voice, or a glance back at the hillsides of Galilee, the courts of Jerusalem, the

road to Bethany, on which his image must be forever seen." [1]

[1] "Seat of Authority in Religion," p. 227. For further information regarding the New Testament books considered in this chapter and the preceding, see Davidson's, Bleek's, and Bernhard Weiss' "New Testament Introductions"; Introductions to the various books, in the Protestant Commentary; articles in the "Encyclopædia Britannica" on Paul and the different New Testament books; Martineau's "Seat of Authority in Religion," pp. 217–285; Pfleiderer's "Paulinism," and his Hibbert "Lectures (1885) on the Influence of Paul"; Renan's "The Apostles" and "St. Paul"; "Bible for Learners," vol. iii.; Chadwick's "Bible of To-day," lecs. vi. and vii.; Matthew Arnold's "St. Paul and Protestantism"; Bacon's "Introduction to the New Testament," 1900; "A Biblical Introduction: The New Testament," by W. F. Adeney, 1899; articles on the various N. T. books in Hastings' "Dictionary of the Bible" and the "Encyclopædia Biblica"; "Die Chronologie der Altchristlichen Litteratur bis Eusebius; Van Adolph Harnack. Erster Band, die Chronologie der Litteratur bis Irenaeus." Leipzig, 1897.

CHAPTER XV.

EXCLUDED LITERATURE.

WE have seen how the various books of the Bible came to be written. We must now inquire how and when they were first thought of as writings of supernatural wisdom, and as such were gathered together to form sacred books —first the Old Testament, and then the New.

It is natural to ask, Why were just these writings and no others included in our Canon? Were not others produced by the Jewish people during the thousand years of the Bible's growth? And if so, why do we have none of them in our sacred volume?

Old Testament Lost Books.—We find, on examination, that no fewer than sixteen books are wanting from the Old Testament which seemingly ought to be there; at least which are referred to in various places in the Bible as if they were equally authoritative with books which are included in the Canon. So far as we know, all of these sixteen books, with one exception, are lost. Their names are as follows:

1. The Book of the Wars of the Lord (referred to in Num. xxi. 14).

2. The Book of Jasher (Josh. x. 13, and 2 Sam. i. 18).

3. The Book of the Manner of the Kingdom, written by Samuel (1 Sam. x. 25).

4. The Books of Nathan and Gad concerning King David (1 Chron. xxix. 29).

5. The Book of the Acts of Solomon (1 Kings xi. 41).

6. The Book of Enoch [1] (referred to in Jude 14, 15).

7. The Books of Nathan, Ahijah, and Iddo concerning King Solomon (2 Chron. ix. 29).

8. Solomon's Songs, Parables, and Treatises on Natural History (1 Kings iv. 32, *seq.*).

9. The Book of Shemaiah concerning King Rehoboam (2 Chron. xii. 15).

10. The Book of Jehu concerning Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. xx. 34).

11. The Book of Isaiah concerning King Uzziah (2 Chron. xxvi. 22).

12. The Words of the Seers to King Manasseh (2 Chron. xxxiii. 18, 19).

13. The Book of Lamentations over King Josiah (2 Chron. xxxv. 25).

14. The Volume of Jeremiah burned by Jehudi (Jer. xxxvi. 2, 6, 23).

15. The Chronicles of the Kings of Judah (mentioned repeatedly in Kings).

16. The Chronicles of the Kings of Israel (mentioned repeatedly in Kings).

Why were these books allowed to perish? Why were they left out from the Old Testament? If scripture writers themselves referred to them as of equal authority with their own writings, how can a line be drawn between them and genuine scripture? Indeed, what is it that constitutes genuine scripture?

But these sixteen books are not all that we get traces of.

Extant Books.—A second list of eighteen writings,

---

[1] This Book of Enoch is extant entire in an Ethiopic version, and in part in a Greek version.

now extant, generally known as the Old Testament "pseudepigraphal" books, must also be noticed. I give their names (the list is a growing one), together with the language in which each is preserved:

1. The Testament of Solomon (Greek).
2. The History of Asenath, Joseph's wife (Latin).
3. The Apocalypse of Baruch (Syriac).
4. The Book of Elias the Prophet.[1]
5. The Book of the Secrets of Enoch (Sclavonic).[2]
6. The Third Book of Esdras (Greek and Latin).
7. The Fourth Book of Esdras (Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic).
8. The Ascension of Isaiah (Ethiopic).
9. The Book Jubilees, "Little Genesis," (Ethiopic).
10. The Testament of Job (Greek).
11 and 12. The Third and Fourth Books of Maccabees (Greek).
13. The Fifth Book of Maccabees (Arabic and Syriac).
14. The Assumption of Moses.[3]
15. The Preaching of Noah to the Antediluvians, according to the Sibylline Oracles.[4]
16. The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs (Greek).
17. The Psalter of Solomon (Greek).
18. The Testament of Adam (Greek, Syriac, and Latin).

According to our standards to-day, the value of these books is not great. Some of them, however, we know exerted a good deal of influence upon early Christian

---

[1] See Fabricius, *Codex Pseudepigr. Veteris Testamenti*, I. 1070.

[2] First made known to Western Europe in 1896 through a translation by W. R. Morrill, edited with Notes and Introduction by R. H. Charles. Though in some respects similar to the Book of Enoch mentioned on the preceding page, it is not the same work.

[3] See Fabricius, *Cod. Pseudepigr. V. T.*, I. 825. [4] *Ibid.*, I. 230.

thought, and were held in high esteem even by scholars like Origen.

The Old Testament Apocrypha.—Of much higher value is a third list, of fourteen books, known as the Old Testament Apocrypha. These are:

1. 1 Esdras.
2. 2 Esdras.
3. Tobit.
4. Judith.
5. The rest of the chapters of the Book of Esther, which are found neither in the Hebrew nor the Chaldee.
6. The Wisdom of Solomon.
7. Ecclesiasticus, or the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach.
8. Baruch.
9. The Song of the Three Holy Children.
10. The History of Susanna.
11. The History of the Destruction of Bel and the Dragon.
12. The Prayer of Manasseh, King of Judah.
13. 1 Maccabees.
14. 2 Maccabees.

These Old Testament apocryphal books are all extant, and are more or less familiar to the public. They are found in the Septuagint, the translation of the Old Testament into Greek, made a century or two before Christ.[1] The Roman Catholic Church claims that they are true scripture, and prints them as a part of her Bible. Protestants, however, take the responsibility of casting

[1] The early Christians used them as true scripture. Says Emil Schürer: "The church of the first three centuries made no essential difference between the writings of the Hebrew Canon and the so-called Apocrypha" (Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia, art. "Apocrypha").

them out; though now and then a Protestant Bible (generally a large one for family or pulpit use) falls into our hands which contains them. Whether these fourteen apocryphal books ought to be in the Bible or not is a question upon which scholars have never been agreed, and upon which the Christian world to-day is about evenly divided. That some of them are superior not only as literature, but in respect to their moral and religious teachings, to several of the books that are now in the Bible, is certain. For example, no unprejudiced mind can hesitate for a moment to place the religious value of the apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon or Ecclesiasticus above that of the canonical Esther or Ecclesiastes.

Scriptures Outside of the New Testament Canon.—Passing now from the Old Testament to the New, what do we find? Are the books that appear in our New Testament Canon all that were written in connection with the origin of the Christian movement? Or, if others were written, how many others? And was there any clear line by which the two classes were separated?

The number of New Testament apocryphal books or fragments that we know to have existed during the early centuries is very large. The names of not fewer than one hundred and nine such works (forty-one extant and sixty-eight lost) are in our possession.

The Forty-one Extant Books.—A translation into English of the whole or a part of the forty-one New Testament apocryphal writings that are extant is often seen printed in a volume, and circulated under the title of the New Testament Apocrypha. A partial list of these writings (with the languages in which they are preserved) is as follows:

The Protevangelium of James (Greek and Latin).

The Gospel of Thomas (Greek and Latin).

The Gospel of the Infancy (Arabic and Latin).

The Gospel of Nicodemus (Greek and Latin).

The Narrative of Joseph of Arimathæa (Greek).

The Acts of Pilate (Greek and Latin).

The General Epistle of Barnabas (Greek).

The First and Second Epistles of Clement (Greek).

The Apostolic Constitutions (Greek, Ethiopic, and Coptic).

The First and Second Books of Hermas (Greek and Latin).

The Sixty-eight Lost Books.—We have knowledge of these lost writings through quotations from them, or references to them, found in Christian authors of the first four centuries. The names of a few of these, with the writers who mention them, are as follows:

The Acts of Andrew (mentioned by Eusebius, Epiphanius, and Gelasius).

The Gospel according to the Twelve Apostles (Origen, Ambrose, and Jerome).

The Gospel of Barnabas (Gelasius).

The Gospel of Basilides (Origen, Ambrose, and Jerome).

The Gospel according to the Egyptians (Origen, Jerome, Epiphanius, and Clement of Alexandria).

The Gospel according to the Hebrews (Hegesippus, Eusebius, Origen, Jerome, and Clement of Alexandria).

The Gospel of Matthias (Origen, Ambrose, Eusebius, and Jerome).

The Preaching of Peter (Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, Jerome, *et. al.*).

The Acts of John (Eusebius, Athanasius, Augustine).

The Gospel of Peter (Eusebius, Tertullian, Origen, Jerome).

The Revelation of Peter (Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, Jerome, *et. al.*).[1]

These one hundred and nine apocryphal books (lost and extant) may be divided into two classes. One class consists of works that have never been regarded as inspired by any sect or part of the Christian Church. These were generally written late—in most cases after the second century. The other class consists of books which were looked upon by larger or smaller groups of churches and religious teachers as inspired, and were employed by them as sacred Scripture. Many of these date at least as far back as the second century; that is to say, nearly or quite as early as a number of the books which are included in our New Testament Canon. Many of them, too, were read extensively in the churches for two or three centuries, and were looked upon by elders, bishops, and eminent Church fathers as inspired. In a preceding chapter I have mentioned at least three Gospels which were thus widely employed as scripture among the early churches; namely, the Gospel according to the Hebrews (called also the Gospel of the Ebionites or of the Nazarenes), the Gospel of the Egyptians, and the Gospel of the Lord (or Marcion's Gospel). But not one of these has a place to-day in our Christian Scriptures, though they probably date earlier than most, if not all, of our present New Testament Gospels. Other writings were held in equally high esteem. The first Epistle of Clement was among the number. This Epistle was read in many churches; it is quoted in the same manner as scriptures by Irenæus, and it is found in the *Codex Alexandrinus*. The

[1] Fragments of this work and the preceding, in Greek, have very recently been discovered, in connection with a Greek MS. of the Book of Enoch.

Shepherd of Hermas was also read in the churches very generally; it is mentioned as inspired by Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen, and it is found in the *Codex Sinaiticus.* Similar respect was paid to the Epistles of Polycarp and Barnabas, the Apostolic Canons, the Apostolic Constitutions; and various liturgies ascribed to St. Peter, St. Mark, etc. (published by Fabricius in his *Codex Apocryphus Novi Testamenti*) are considered by such scholars as Whiston and Grabe as of equal authority with any of the genuine apostolic compositions.[1]

Now why have all these books been left out of our New Testament? Who was authorized to omit them? If the clear stamp of the Divine was upon the books which found a place in the Canon, but not upon these, it seems strange that so many churches and eminent Christian teachers were unable to distinguish the difference. Is it said that these were omitted because they were not written by apostles? Some of our New Testament books also were not written by apostles. Is it said they were left out because they were seen to be wanting in religious value? This test would doubtless exclude some, but it would hardly shut out others. In ethical and spiritual quality the excluded Marcion's Gospel or Shep-

[1] See Whiston's "Primitive Christianity" and Grabe's "Spicilegium." On the apocryphal and pseudepigraphal literature connected with the Old and New Testaments, see articles "Apocrypha" and "Apocalyptic Literature" in the Encylopædia Britannica; "Apocrypha" in McClintock and Strong's Cyclopædia; "Apocrypha" and "Pseudepigrapha" in the Schaff-Herzog Encylopædia; Bissell's "The Apocrypha of the Old Testament;" Fabricius' "Codex Pseudepigraphus Veteris Testamenti," and "Codex Apocryphus Novi Testamenti;" Tischendorf's "Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha," and "Evangelia Apocrypha;" translations of New Testament Apocrypha into English, by B. Harris Cowper, and by Walker, in the "Ante-Nicene Library."

herd of Hermas is certainly superior to the included Epistle of Jude, or even the Revelation.

Here, then, is the answer that we find to our question, Are the writings which we have bound together in our Old and New Testaments all that were produced by the Jewish people during the thousand years of the Bible's growth? We find coming into existence, side by side with the groups of books which form both of our Testaments, other groups which have been left outside. Nor does there appear any clear line of division between those excluded and those included. If the non-canonical books came into existence naturally, so did the canonical. If the non-canonical books do not claim to be miraculously inspired, the same is true of most, if not all, of the canonical. If when the non-canonical books were written they were not regarded as sacred Scripture, it is also true that when the canonical books were written they were generally not regarded as sacred Scripture: the idea of their sacredness grew up later, and in most cases much later. Nor is the ethical or the religious test one that is more than in part applicable, for the superior ethics and the superior religion are sometimes on the side of the non-canonical or excluded books.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE OLD TESTAMENT APOCRYPHAL BOOKS.

All the classes of writings named in the preceding chapter, which came into being in connection with later Judaism and early Christianity, and which knocked for entrance into the Bible but were refused, are full of interest and significance. All have light to throw upon the times which produced them, upon the thoughts which were uppermost in the minds of men during those ages, and especially upon the causes which conspired to create the Christian movement. It would be interesting, if space permitted, to take up each class in turn, and find out the nature and character of the various books that it contains. There is one class, however, which must not be passed by. It is that which I have called the "Old Testament Apocrypha." (See p. 167.)

The word *Apocrypha* means "hidden things." Probably its earliest use was in connection with religious books which were supposed to contain hidden mysteries. Later it was applied to books whose origin was hidden or unknown. From this it came in time to be degraded and given the bad meaning of *spurious*. This is unfortunate, for it tends to create a prejudice against the whole body of literature known as Apocryphal, when as a fact some of that literature is of a high type and quite worthy the attention of all thoughtful minds.

The Historic Gap between the Two Testaments. — Without the Old Testament Apocryphal books there would

be a wide historic gap or blank between the Old and New Testaments, which we could not bridge or fill.

The old idea has been that Malachi, the prophecy which stands last in the Old Testament, was the latest written book of that Testament, and that its date is 397 B.C. If this were the case, and if we possessed none of the writings called Apocryphal, there would be an interval or gap of four and a half centuries — "silent centuries" they have been called — between the close of one Testament and the beginning of the other. As a fact, the date which has been ascribed to Malachi, is probably not very far wrong (scholars now are disposed to regard the true date as about 420 B.C.); but we now know that Malachi was by no means the latest Old Testament writing. Probably for more than 250 years after Malachi's day the production of Old Testament literature continued. Within these 250 years fall the Book of Joel, the Books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers (in their present completed form), the Song of Solomon, Nehemiah in part, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, and the Books of Proverbs and Psalms as finally compiled. Daniel almost certainly dates as late as 165 B.C.; while the Psalter probably was not closed earlier than 150 B.C. Thus we find that the gap of "silent centuries" is really reduced more than one half by the Old Testament literature itself, when we come to understand the true time of origin of that literature. Nor is this all. As soon as the door of the Old Testament closes, that of the Apocryphal literature opens; indeed this opens even before the other is shut; and through it there comes a long succession of other writings appearing at uncertain intervals right on down to New Testament times. By means of knowledge gained from these, the supposed gap or blank is entirely removed; and it is pro-

bably quite within the truth to say that there are no centuries of Jewish history about which we know more than those which immediately precede the birth of Christianity.

A Great Age. — It has been supposed that this "period between the Testaments" was one of slight historic importance, a stagnant time, when little or nothing of moment was transpiring in the world, or at least in Palestine. But nothing could be farther from the truth. The period was one of the great ages of the world. Hardly any in history has witnessed more important events. In the career of the Jewish people it was a crisis time. As has been truly said, during this period "the empire of the world was changed from East to West, and the whole face of Jewish society was revolutionized. How marvellously different from the Persian ascendency which pervades the latest pages of the Old Testament is the scene presented when we open the first pages of the New Testament! By some means nothing less than a universal transformation has ensued. Judea is a province of an empire of which Daniel did not so much as dream. Palestine is studded throughout with Greek cities bearing Greek names. The Greek language has come into wide-spread use on every hand. Instead of the age-long tendency of the Jews to idolatry, monotheism has become the passionate faith of all Jewry. There is a universal belief among them that the Messiah will come, and the most religious part of the nation is firmly convinced of a continuance of human life beyond the grave. Jewish traders are settled in all the important cities of the Roman world around the Mediterranean Sea, and in such numbers that there are as many Jews outside as inside the limits of the Holy Land. In every Jewish city there is a synagogue, an institution of which the Old

Testament is ignorant, an institution which is the centre of the social and religious life of the people, having become more important than the temple itself. Pharisees and Sadducees, Essenes and Herodians move on the narrow stage of Judaism; and of the origin of these sects we glean no hint in the pages of the Old Testament. How did all this come to be? Is there no light to be thrown on the screen of history, by which students may be enabled to answer the questions which are naturally aroused by these changes?"

The Value of the Apocryphal Writings. — The truth is that but for the Apocrypha these centuries would remain for us almost blank; but in these neglected books we have pictures of the inner life of the Jews during this transitional period. Some of these books originated under the Persian ascendency and portray life in exile; some of them were produced in Palestine, and give the life and thought of the home-country; some were written in Egypt, and show the influence of Greek thought upon Jewish minds there. Thus in the Apocryphal writings we hear the voice not alone of the Judaism of Palestine but perhaps even more still of that wider Judaism which was penetrating all the countries round about, through the Jews of the "Dispersion." These Jews outside of Palestine for the most part clung tenaciously to their own faith, kept in sympathetic relations with the home-land, and as often as possible revisited it. As time went on their influence came to be strong upon Palestinian Judaism itself; and of course that influence was for breadth, for an ever-widening liberality of spirit, for greater sympathy toward the religious ideas of other peoples. To some extent the Apocryphal books were the product of these non-Palestinian Jews, and to a very large degree they reflect their spirit and views.

All these influences were silently preparing the way for the rise of a movement in Palestine like that inaugurated by Jesus and Paul, — a movement, which, when it came, would have for its object the breaking down of the walls between Jew and Gentile, and the establishment of a universal faith founded upon those ethical and spiritual elements which know no bounds of nation or race.

The Close Relation of Christianity to Judaism. — Thus we discover that the Christian movement when it arose was not a strange or unaccountable or unrelated thing. It was simply Judaism carried forward to another stage of its development,— a stage of development induced and necessitated by its new and broader outlook, its world relations. Instead of being a mystery or a miracle, the new Christianity was an effect springing from fully adequate and plainly discoverable causes. Its rise was as natural as the rise of Stoicism in Greece, or Buddhism in India, or of the Papacy in the middle ages, or of Liberal Christianity in our day. Jesus was as much a child of his age as was Isaiah, or Socrates, or Augustine, or John Wesley. The Christian movement came from God, but it came not like lightning out of a clear sky, but through those divine forces which had long been working among the Jewish people (shall we not say the Greek also?) and which at last culminated and found a voice in Jesus. All this the Apocryphal books help us to understand, as without them would be impossible.

Such being the significance and value of this Apocryphal literature, we cannot wonder that the Jewish people in Palestine prized and made much use of it; nor that the Jews outside of Palestine virtually adopted it as a part of their sacred scriptures,— as we see by the fact that when a century or two before Christ the Old Testament was trans-

lated into Greek for the use of these outside Jews, the translation (the Septuagint) was made to include the Apocryphal books.[1] Nor can we wonder that these Apocryphal writings were widely read by the early Christian Church, and quoted by the early Christian Theologians as if they were of equal authority with the Old Testament; that they continued to be virtually a part of the Christian biblical canon down to modern times; that in the Roman Catholic scripture canon they still have a place; that Luther's Bible contained a majority of them; that the leading translations and revisions of our Protestant English Bible from Coverdale's down to the Authorized Version all included them; and that the scholars who gave us our Revised Version revised these Apocryphal writings with the rest, although they published them in a separate volume.[2]

The Old Testament Apocryphal books are fourteen in number, as we have seen in the preceding chapter. It will be worth our while to take them up one by one and give a brief glance at each. Let us not make the mistake, however, of supposing that we are going to find all of equal value. As a fact they vary greatly in quality and worth. The order in which they have been given (and in which they usually appear) is not chronological, nor does there

---

[1] The Septuagint, including the Apocrypha, may very truly be called the Bible of the Jews of the Dispersion. Part of the books of the Apocrypha were written in Hebrew and part in Greek. None of them were ever really admitted to the Hebrew Old Testament Canon. Probably this was because the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70 A.D. closed the door of that canon against any further entrances. Many, if not all of them were clearly on the way to canonization, and almost certainly would have reached it at no distant day except for the catastrophe to the Jewish Capital, which spread consternation everywhere, arrested progress, and turned the eyes of everybody toward the past.

[2] The Revised Old Testament Apocrypha appeared in the year 1895.

seem to be any reason for it; but since it is the common order it will be best for us to follow it.

First Esdras. — This book is hardly more than another form of the Old Testament canonical books of Ezra and Nehemiah combined into one. Those books were originally written in Hebrew. In this work we have the main story which they tell re-told by a later writer in Greek, with certain transpositions and inversions and legendary additions. The work does not add anything to the historical material which the older books give us. One short episode, however, is very interesting, if not as history, at least as literature. It is an account of a supposed contest of wit in the presence of King Darius of Persia. The King has made a great feast. After the guests have departed, three young men connected with the royal household agree each to write a sentence naming what he believes to be the strongest thing in the world, and place the result under the King's pillow, to be read by him when he rises in the morning. They carry out their agreement. In the morning the King discovers the three pieces of writing and commands that they shall be read before an assembly of his courtiers summoned for the purpose. The first writing maintains that wine is the strongest thing in the world, the second that the King is strongest, and the third that women are stronger than the other two, but that truth is strongest of all. Each writer states his reasons for his claim, and they are all very apt. The verdict of those who listen, is that the third writer is victor, and that truth is stronger than all else. It is here that we find that magnificent sentence, quite worthy of a place beside the noblest utterances in the Bible: "Truth abideth, and is strong forever; she liveth and conquereth forevermore." We are told that when the company heard this, they

shouted and said, "Great is Truth and strong above all things."

Second Esdras.—This book is of much later date than the first, indeed, it was probably written after the birth of Jesus, and may be regarded as representing ideas that were widely prevalent in Palestine during his lifetime. It belongs to that large class of writings known as Apocalyptic. We have already obtained glimpses of these but they demand still further attention.

During the two centuries preceding and the two following the birth of Christ no writings were more popular among the Jewish people than Apocalypses, and none exerted a greater influence upon late Palestinian Judaism and upon early Christianity. Quite a dozen are still in existence, while the titles are known of others that have been lost (see pp. 166, 168-169). As we have seen (p. 162), one of these Apocalyptic writings found a place in the Old Testament (the Book of Daniel), and one in the New Testament (Revelation). A third appears here among the Apocrypha in the form of this book of 2 Esdras. A fourth, a work of great influence in its day (the Book of Enoch) is quoted in the Epistle of Jude, but it did not succeed in obtaining admission to either Testament, or to the Old Testament Apocrypha.

The general characteristics of all these Apocalyptic writings are much the same, whether the writings were produced before the Christian movement began or afterward, by Jews who knew nothing of Christianity, or by Jews who had become Christians. They are a kind of prophecy in which the imagination of the writer usually finds wide scope. They indulge much in symbolic visions of the future. Their main theme is the final triumph of good over evil and of the people of God over their enemies.

They are often fanatical and fantastical, and yet they command our respect by their sincerity and passionate earnestness. To a greater or less degree they are utterances of pain, of anxiety, of faith struggling with despair. They are cries of an oppressed and suffering people longing and waiting and praying for deliverance from their foes,— disappointed and baffled a hundred times over, yet hoping against hope, and keeping their faith alive by painting for themselves pictures of miraculous and wonderful ways in which they dream their God may send them deliverance at last. Very naturally the thought of a great Leader in the deliverance, to be specially raised up by God for the purpose, a Messiah, has a large place in these Apocalyptic writings. It is from these writings that the Messianic idea comes into Christianity. The Jewish Apocalypses make no reference to Jesus; but the Christian Apocalypses portray Jesus as the Messiah; and the deliverance which they seek is that of the Christian Church from its enemies.

It is enough to say of this Second Book of Esdras that it is a good representative of these Apocalypses. Though written so late it is thoroughly Jewish, showing no sign of being influenced by Christianity. "It is a wail of bitter disappointment over the hard fate of Judea; but the persuasion finally prevails that, however dark the present, the Lord cannot withhold his mercy forever, and the appearance of his anointed one cannot be long delayed."

Tobit and Judith. — The Old Testament contains two books which very properly have been called romances,— namely, Ruth and Esther. Among the Old Testament Apocrypha there are also two romances, which are quite worthy to rank with the earlier productions. They are Tobit and Judith.

The Book of Tobit is a story of the Captivity. It is a

charming idyl of Hebrew life in exile. It is full of simple piety, and also full of a tender spirit of humanity. Among the captives taken away from Palestine to Nineveh is an honest Israelite, Tobit by name, who, as the years go by, gets for himself a comfortable and happy home in the new land, and accumulates a competency, a part of which he intrusts to a Jewish banker in distant Media. By and by misfortunes befall Tobit; he and his Hebrew brethren are persecuted; his possessions are confiscated, and by a sudden misfortune he loses his sight. He has no resource left him except to send away and get the money which he has placed in the keeping of his far-away friend. Who shall go? It must be his son Tobias, who, however, is so young that a traveling companion is needed for him. One is found in another young man named Azarias. The two set out on the long journey together. Before they reach the end they come to the city of Ecbatana where relations of Tobias live. So the two resolve to stop for a visit. In the home where they are entertained is a very winsome young lady named Sara, with whom Tobias very naturally falls in love. The accommodating Azarias volunteers to make the rest of the journey alone, leaving Tobias to do his courting. When Azarias comes back bringing the money the lovers are married; and the happy three return home to Nineveh. Azarias turns out to be an angel, who by his superhuman wisdom and kindness has brought all this good fortune. He restores sight to the happy old man, and then disappears.

The details of the story are quaint and curious, including impossibilities and supernaturalisms that remind one of the Arabian Nights, and with all the rest, not a little bad geography. But a more delightful picture of the simple, kindly, God-fearing life of an old time Hebrew family in the Orient it would be hard to conceive.

Very different is the story of Judith. This is not a romance of domestic piety and love, but of intense patriotism and the most heroic daring. Judith is one of the striking characters of fiction. She is a second Jael, a woman Brutus, a Hebrew Charlotte Corday. Many are the artists who have essayed to paint her, splendidly arrayed, commanding in figure, of rare beauty, holding in her hand the head of Holofernes, the Assyrian General, whom by her cunning she has brought under her power, and slain, to save her city from the destruction which he was bringing upon it. The story of her deed is powerfully told, — the reasons for it, the results that came from it, and the consummate skill and bravery with which she accomplished her terrible task. There will always be difference of opinion about the ethics involved in this story. But as to the strength and literary quality of the narrative, as well as the courage and patriotism of the heroine, there does not seem room for difference of view.

The Rest of the Chapters of the Book of Esther. — All scholars agree that the Book of Esther is not history, but fiction. This group of brief Apocryphal writings consists of certain additions which some unknown author has seen fit to make to the original book. Naturally, the additions are as much fiction as the book itself; nor do they add much, if anything, to its literary value. Probably they were written by some one who wanted to make the book seem more religious. Esther has been much criticized by certain writers because it does not contain anywhere the name of God. The author of these additions (seemingly some pious Jew) seeks to remove that defect by adding a section in which there is plentiful use made of the divine name. All the craft and hate and cruelty of the original book are left, and indeed more still are added; but since

references to God are often brought in, the religious character of the book is supposed to be much improved. Alas, how much was this old Apocryphal writer like so many men in all the ages since, who have imagined that evil can somehow be made into good if only it be associated with a sufficient array of pious words.

The Wisdom of Solomon. — This is a great book. Although much shorter than several of the other Apocryphal writings, in literary excellence and in ethical and spiritual quality it is clearly entitled to a first place among them.

It ought not to be associated with the name of Solomon, for it was not written until a thousand years after Solomon's time. It belongs to the "Wisdom Literature" of Israel, and hence is to be classed, in a way, with the Old Testament Books of Job, Ecclesiastes, and Proverbs; but it is much more philosophical, and we may say religious, than any of these except Job. Probably its author lived in Alexandria, which in a measure would account for the Greek element in its thought, and especially for the fact that its conception of Wisdom is quite as much Greek as Hebrew. This conception approaches near to the "Logos Doctrine" of the Alexandrian Philo, and to the echo or reflection of that doctrine found in the New Testament in the prologue to the Fourth Gospel. The following sentences show how exalted is the conception of Wisdom found in this Apocryphal book: —

"She (Wisdom) is a breath of the power of God and a clear effluence of the glory of the Almighty." "She is an effluence from everlasting light, and an unspotted mirror of the working of God, and an image of his goodness." "She reneweth all things; passing into holy souls she maketh them friends of God and prophets." "She is fairer than

the sun and above all the constellations of the stars; being compared with light she is found to be before it; for to the light of day succeedeth night, but against Wisdom evil doth not prevail." These sentences illustrate at once the high literary quality of the book and the subtlety and depth of its religious thought.

It is worthy of note that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is much more clearly taught in this Apocryphal work than in any part of the Old Testament. Here are some of its strong statements: "The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God; in the eyes of the unwise they seem to perish, but they are in happiness. . . . Their hope is full of immortality." "God created man for immortality and made him an image of his own eternity."

Even the teaching of the New Testament is not so unequivocal as this. Nearly everywhere the immortality that it teaches is associated with, if not conditioned upon, the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. But here we have the clear thought that the soul itself is immortal without reference to the physical body.

This noble book would not be out of place in either the Old Testament or the New.

Ecclesiasticus. — This is the only book of the Apocrypha of whose authorship we are sure. The book itself tells us that it was written by Jesus (the Greek form of the Hebrew name *Joshua*), son of Sirach Eleazer, of Jerusalem. Hence the name often given to it, "The Wisdom of Jesus, the Son of Sirach." Its time of writing was probably nearly two centuries before Christ; hence we may set it down with considerable certainty as the oldest of the Apocryphal writings. As to its nature, it is a sort of Hebrew text-book in morals. Indeed, it has been declared to be the most complete text-book of practical morals that

the religion of ancient Israel produced. In common with the preceding work it belongs to the Hebrew Wisdom Literature. Its kinship to the Book of Proverbs is so close that one can easily imagine it to be a continuation of that production. It opens with the praise of Wisdom, which it personifies; it would have men love her, whose ways lead always to safety and peace.

In form, much of the book is poetry; some translations give it a poetical form throughout. In Professor Moulton's arrangement it is a mixture of prose and poetry, — that is, of short prose essays, on a great variety of subjects connected with the practical conduct of life, and of short poetical pieces — sonnets, epigrams, and others — upon similar practical themes. It shows much keen observation and much wise reflection. Many proverbs are scattered throughout its pages; some whole chapters are made up of proverbs. Some of its passages are perhaps the nearest approach to humor that we find in ancient Hebrew literature. The spirit of the book is human, manly, stimulating to right living, encouraging to a well ordered and earnest religious life. It is a thoroughly good book to read privately; and it contains many valuable lessons for reading in churches.

Baruch.— There was a man, a real historical personage, named Baruch. He was the associate and secretary of the prophet Jeremiah, who lived at the beginning of the captivity in Babylon, six centuries before Christ. This Apocryphal book is written in his name; but of course it was not actually written by him, for it did not come into existence until some hundreds of years after his death. This is a case similar to many which we have both in the Apocryphal writings and in the Old Testament, of associating with a book the name of some distinguished character of

the past, perhaps with the thought of thereby adding a little to the dignity and standing of the work; or, possibly with the idea of doing honor to the character named, as we to-day erect statues to great men of past time.

This Book of Baruch is a sort of combined history and prophecy, associated both with Babylon and Jerusalem. But its supposed history is mainly legend; and its prophecy, though interesting and earnest and containing noble passages, is not of so much importance that it need detain us.

Song of the Three Holy Children. History of Susanna. Bel and the Dragon.— These three Apocryphal writings are often grouped together, under the title of "Additions to Daniel." With two of them the name of the prophet Daniel is directly associated. Bel and the Dragon is a story of the same type as that of Daniel in the Lion's Den, which means that children always like it when it is read or told to them. The history of Susanna tells how Daniel rescued an innocent woman from two men who had plotted her ruin. The Song of the Three Holy Children is a hymn of thanksgiving which the three Hebrew young men, who were cast into the fiery furnace, are said to have sung in the midst of the flames.

The Prayer of Manasseh, King of Judah.— Of all the Kings of Judah, perhaps Manasseh (or Manasses) was the worst. This prayer of repentance and contrition is supposed to have been offered by him on his death bed. As a prayer it is somewhat impressive. But the association of any such religious utterance with King Manasseh, either in life or death, is without historic warrant.

First and Second Maccabees.— These two books, with which the list of the Old Testament Apocryphal writings closes, are histories. But the second is not of much worth,

partly because it is only a compilation covering the same ground (or a portion of the same ground) as the first, and partly because it contains so much that is legendary, exaggerated, miraculous, and historically unreliable. We may, therefore, pass the second book by, and confine ourselves to the earlier and more important work.

First Maccabees is a book of great historical value,—simple, sober, and straight-forward in its narratives, well-written, and in a high degree trustworthy. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say, that as regards these qualities, it is quite the equal, if not the superior, of any of the historical books of the Old Testament. And it covers one of the most important periods in the history of Israel, that of the heroic — the almost superhumanly heroic — struggle for liberty made by the Jewish people under the leadership of the famous Maccabean family, from the year 175 to the year 135 B.C.

Palestine was under the sway of Antiochus Epiphanes, the Syrian Greek King who, in addition to other tyrannies, undertook to crush out the Jewish religion, and to plant the Greek in its place. The public worship of the Jews was everywhere forbidden. Their sacred books were burned. Every village in the land was required to erect an altar to the Greek gods and to offer sacrifices thereon each day. In Jerusalem the Temple was desecrated, and in it an altar was set up for the worship of the Olympian Zeus. This drove the Jews to frenzy. The consequence was a fierce revolt led by Judas Maccabeus, his father and four brothers, who, flying to the mountains, gathered around them there bands of men so devoted and desperate in their determination to protect their religious faith from destruction, that they defeated every army that Antiochus could send against them. The struggle was long and terrible. Never was

there seen more fiery religious zeal, sterner patriotism or more heroic valor, than on the part of these men who were fighting for all that was dear to them. As a result, their religion was saved, the old worship was everywhere restored, the Temple was purified, and once more dedicated to Jehovah. Even political freedom was won, and, for a brief period, a native Jewish government was set up again in Palestine.

Judas Maccabeus is not only a great name in Jewish history, but it is one which will never cease to occupy an honored place among the patriots and religious heroes of the world.

One wonders that a work of such historical and religious value as the First Book of Maccabees, and narrating events so honorable to the Jewish race, should not have been given a place in their recognized Scriptures. Indeed, it is one of the paradoxes of ecclesiastical history that a sacred volume, which contains such writings as the Books of Joshua, Judges, Kings, Chronicles, Ecclesiastes, and Esther, should all these centuries have remained closed against not only First Maccabees, but Tobit, Ecclesiasticus, and the Wisdom of Solomon.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE FORMATION OF THE CANON: THE OLD TESTAMENT; THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE construction of a definite and authorized list of sacred writings is something not peculiar to any one religion. The followers of Buddha, Zoroaster, and Mahomet formed such canons. It could not be otherwise than that a people so intensely religious as the Jews, and so deeply feeling themselves to be the chosen people of God and under his guidance, should do the same.

The Old Testament Canon.—The Canon of the Old Testament was made up of three different collections of books, called by the Jews the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa. Says Wellhausen: "It was the Law that first became canonical through the influence of Ezra and Nehemiah; the Prophets became so considerably later, and the Hagiographa last of all." This really epitomizes the whole story; but it will be more intelligible if a few details are added.

The formation of the Hebrew Canon was comparatively late in time, and it was a slow and gradual process. For some centuries after the people had come into possession of the earlier Old Testament writings—the eighth and seventh century prophecies, the earlier collections of Psalms and Proverbs, the historical works now woven into the Pentateuch, and known to us as the Elohistic and Jehovistic documents, etc.—they had no sacred Canon. As

yet all these books existed separately and were circulated separately. Some were known better than others; some were held in higher esteem than others; but none were yet elevated to the rank of sacred writings.

The Law.—The first step pointing in the direction of a Canon seems to have been taken in the reign of King Josiah, a little more than 600 years before Christ, when that monarch accepted the mysterious "book of the law," said to have been found in the Temple by Hilkiah the priest (probably the Book of Deuteronomy), and proclaimed it as the law of the land, instituting a general national reformation in harmony with its teachings.

That this book, however, did not come into general acceptance at that time, or for a century and a half afterwards, is plain from the numerous prophetical and other writings of that period. Not until we reach the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, almost a century after the captivity, do we find a second step (and this time an effectual one) taken toward a Canon. Ezra and Nehemiah come from Babylon to Jerusalem filled with zeal for the service of the Lord. They bring with them an important book which they call the book of the law of Moses, containing an elaborate code for the regulation of the temple worship and the religious life of the people. As soon as they can prepare the way for its favorable reception, they call the people together in a great assembly, read it to them, and bind them with a solemn covenant to accept and henceforth obey it. This is in the year 444 B.C. The book was almost beyond question essentially, not indeed, our complete Pentateuch, or five so-called "Books of Moses," but the "Priestly Document" ("*P*") which was soon after combined with "*J*," "*E*," and "*D*" (see preceding pp. 77-78) and thus became our Pentateuch,

or Books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy — known among the Jews as "The Law."

The Prophets.—With the law thus lifted up into sacredness, and with the eyes of the people turned more and more to the past, as from this time on they were, it was only a question of time when the writings of the old prophets also, of whom the nation was so proud, would be lifted up into sacredness and added to the Canon. This is precisely what we see going on during the next two centuries. The prophetical writings are gradually gathered together, are subjected to those revisions and editings of which we discover so many traces,[1] are read more and more among the people, and are lifted up into ever increasing honor, until by about the year 250 B.C. the second part of the Canon is formed—that part known among the Jews as the Prophets, containing the Books of Joshua, Judges, First and Second Samuel, First and Second Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve minor prophets.

The Hagiographa.—But the Canon cannot stop here. Other writings, some of them of much importance, are in existence, and the work of production is still going forward. Out of these a third collection is gathered together by about the year 100 B.C. We find this collection called the Hagiographa. It was composed of those books of our Old Testament not included in the Law or the Prophets; namely, Psalms, Proverbs, Job, the Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and First and Second Chronicles. And yet there continued long to be doubt about some of

[1] For example, in the Book of Isaiah, which joins together the productions of two writers, and the Book of Zechariah which mixes those of three.

the books. As late as the death of Paul there was much dispute whether Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon ought to be included. Indeed, none of the books of this collection were ever put by the Jewish people, even up to the time of Christ, on the same level of authority with the writings of the two older collections. Highest of all ranked the Law; somewhat below this, the Prophets; distinctly below both, the Hagiographa. Indeed, it was only with some hesitancy, and a little license of speech, that the books of the Hagiographa were spoken of as real scripture at all.

Such, in brief, is the story of the formation of the Old Testament Canon, according to the best information we are able to obtain. Is it a story that excludes the possibility of error? Only a prejudiced mind can claim that. Unquestionably the result which it chronicles is one whose excellence, on the whole, we may well be appreciative of. Yet competent scholarship makes for it no claim of inerrancy.

The New Testament Canon.—We come now to the New Testament. What do we find here as to the formation of the Canon? In important respects the Old Testament story is repeated. Within a hundred and fifty years from the time of the birth of Christianity the young religion created for itself an extensive and varied literature. It was as natural and inevitable that, sooner or later, out of this literature it would form a sacred book, as it had been that Judaism should form a sacred book out of the literature of *its* religious experience and life. This was what actually happened. Up to the beginning of the second century none of the Christians seemingly conceived it possible that there could be any other sacred Scriptures except those of the Old Testa-

ment. After the Gospels and various Epistles came into existence, they were for a long time much less esteemed than the old scriptures. Indeed, up to about the middle of the second century they were not so highly esteemed as the oral traditions of the churches in which any of the apostles had preached. But by the close of the second century a change appears. Certain New Testament books have come into more general favor than the rest, and are beginning to be classed to a certain extent by themselves as a new sacred collection. As time goes on, these grow more and more into use among the churches. Yet for centuries the various churches continued to use, side by side with the writings which make up our New Testament to-day, various books which we call spurious. It is curious to note that hardly one of the great writers and "Fathers" of the early Church draws the line of canonicity of New Testament books just where we draw it. In almost every case they either include some books that we reject, or else reject some books that we include. For example, Irenæus, one of the earliest and most authoritative, rejects five books which we have now in the New Testament; viz., Hebrews, Jude, James, Second Peter, Third John; while he puts great value upon the Shepherd of Hermas, one of the so-called apocryphal books which we reject, and calls it scripture. Again, Clement of Alexandria classes three apocryphal books—to wit, the Apocalypse of Peter, the Epistle of Barnabas, and the Shepherd of Hermas—as of equal value and authority with our three New Testament books, Hebrews, Second John, and Jude. The celebrated Tertullian cast out all the books of the New Testament, except the four Gospels, Acts, thirteen Epistles of Paul, the Revelation, and First John. Even Athanasius quotes

a number of the apocryphal books as of equal value and inspiration with those which are included in our present Canon.

The Age which Produced the New Testament Canon.—One fact alone, when we come duly to consider it, makes it impossible for us to think of the age which gives us our New Testament Canon as one capable of any other than imperfect work in such a direction. That fact is, the universal credulity and want of critical scholarship which prevailed. We, in our age of science, which investigates and tests everything, can have no adequate conception of the ease with which men accepted whatever they desired to accept, upon the smallest modicum of evidence, or even with no real evidence at all. In the weighty and carefully considered words of Dr. Hedge: "After all that Biblical critics and antiquarian research have raked from the dust of antiquity in proof of the genuineness and authenticity of the books of the New Testament, credibility still labors with the fact that the age in which these books were received and put in circulation was one in which the science of criticism as developed by the moderns—the science which scrutinizes statements, balances evidence for and against, and sifts the true from the false—did not exist; an age when a boundless credulity disposed men to believe in wonders as readily as in ordinary events, requiring no stronger proof in the case of the former than sufficed to establish the latter, viz., hearsay and vulgar report; an age when literary honesty was a virtue almost unknown, and when, consequently, literary forgeries were as common as genuine productions, and transcribers of sacred books did not scruple to alter the text in the interest of personal views and doctrinal prepossessions. The newly discovered Sina-

itic code, the earliest known manuscript of the New Testament, dates from the fourth century. Tischendorf the discoverer, a very orthodox critic, speaks without reserve of the license in the treatment of the text apparent in this manuscript—a license, he says, especially characteristic of the first three centuries."[1]

We must bear in mind that it was from such an age as this that our New Testament Canon comes.

Says Davidson: "The exact principles that guided the formation of a Canon cannot be discovered. Definite grounds for the reception or rejection of books were not very clearly apprehended. The choice was determined by various circumstances. The development was pervaded by no critical or definite principle. No member of the synod [that might be at any time engaged in considering the subject of what books ought to be regarded as canonical] exercised his critical faculty; a number would decide such matters summarily. Bishops proceeded in the track of tradition or authority." Moreover, a great deal of bigotry and partisanship and bad blood was manifested from first to last. Bishops freely accused bishops of forgery of sacred writings and of alteration of the oldest texts; and, altogether, the debates and proceedings of the synods and councils that had part in settling the Canon remind one very much of some of the worst political conventions of our day.[2]

[1] "Ways of the Spirit," p. 325. For an excellent picture of the intellectual condition of Christendom during the ages in which the Canon of the New Testament was being settled, see Lecky's "History of European Morals," vol. ii. pp. 108–211.

[2] On the spirit that pervaded the councils, see Lecky's "European Morals," vol. ii. pp. 207–210. Says Dean Milman: "Nowhere is Christianity less attractive than in the councils of the Church. . . . Intrigue, injustice, violence, decisions on authority alone, and that the authority of a turbulent

The Canon Never Settled.—Definite and final results were never reached. It is claimed by some that the Council of Laodicea (363 A.D.) settled the Canon finally; but this, Davidson, as high an authority on the subject as we have, denies. These are his words: "Notwithstanding the numerous endeavors both in the East and West to settle the Canon during the fourth and fifth centuries, it was not finally closed. The doubts of individuals were still expressed, and succeeding ages testify to the want of universal agreement respecting several books." Indeed, if that council did settle what books properly belong in the Old and New Testaments, then we are wrong to-day in not including Baruch in our Old Testament, and in retaining Revelation in our New. Moreover, if, as is sometimes claimed, the Council of Carthage (A.D. 397?) settled the Canon, then we are wrong in not including Ecclesiasticus, Wisdom, Tobit, Judith, and First and Second Maccabees in our present Bible.

Indeed, the Romanists allow that the Canon was not settled until the modern Council of Trent, held from 1545 to 1563, in the midst of the German Reformation. This council proceeded to pass a formal decree declaring what books properly belong in the Bible. The list is that of our present Protestant Bible, with the addition of the fourteen books of the Old Testament Apocrypha. The Romanists, therefore, with their theory that their church

---

majority . . . detract from the reverence and impugn the judgments of at least the later councils. The close is almost invariably a terrible anathema, in which it is impossible not to discern the tones of human hatred, of arrogant triumph, of rejoicing at the damnation imprecated against the humiliated adversary." "History of Latin Christianity," vol. i. p. 227. See also Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," chap. xlvii.; and Milman's "History of Latin Christianity," book i. chap. ii., and book ii. chaps, i.–iv. *passim*.

is infallible in its decisions, may well claim to have an authoritative scripture Canon. But there can be no ground for such claim on the part of Protestants.

The Canon Imperfect.—Luther was decidedly of the opinion that our present Canon is imperfect. He thought that the Old Testament Book of Esther did not belong in the Bible. On the other hand, in translating the Old Testament, he translated the apocryphal books of Judith, Wisdom, Tobit, Sirach, Baruch, First and Second Maccabees, and the Prayer of Manasseh. In his prefaces he gives his judgment concerning these books. With regard to First Maccabees, he thinks it almost equal to the other books of Holy Scripture, and not unworthy to be reckoned among them. Of Wisdom, he says he was long in doubt whether it should be numbered among the canonical books; and of Sirach he says that it is a right good book, proceeding from a wise man. He had judgments equally decided regarding certain New Testament books. He thought the Epistle to the Hebrews came neither from Paul nor any of the apostles, and was not to be put on an equality with Epistles written by apostles themselves. The Apocalypse (or Revelation) he considered neither apostolic nor prophetic, and of little or no worth. He did not believe the Epistle of Jude proceeded from an apostle. James' Epistle he pronounced unapostolic, and "an epistle of straw."

The great Swiss reformer Zwingli maintained that the Apocalypse is not properly a biblical book. Even Calvin did not think that Paul was the author of Hebrews, or Peter of the book called Second Peter; while as to the Book of Revelation, he denounced it as unintelligible, and prohibited the pastors of Geneva from all attempts at interpreting it.

Such, then, are some of the more important facts regarding the formation of our Old and New Testament Canons, as the most candid and scholarly criticism of our generation has brought them to view. In the light of these facts it is easy to see that the men who are responsible for our Bible being what it is, made many and even grave mistakes.

And yet, let us not allow ourselves to judge narrowly or unjustly. Could we understand all the circumstances, we should probably be surprised, and certainly we should see that we have reason to be grateful, that those mistakes were not more and graver still. That the books which have been declared canonical, and handed down as such to us, are on the whole of so high a type, morally and spiritually, argues much for the trustworthiness of the moral and spiritual intuitions of the race. Moreover, it argues that a great and wonderful law, like that which the scientists call "natural selection," or "the survival of the fittest," exists and works powerfully and perpetually not only in the physically organic world, but also quite as really in the intellectual, moral, and religious worlds. Or, to put essentially the same thing in the form in which Christianity would put it, it argues that there is abroad in the world an infinite "Spirit of Truth" working everywhere, and "leaving himself not without witness" in any age.[1]

---

[1] For further information regarding the Canon of the Old and New Testaments, see Davidson's "Canon of the Bible," or the article "Canon" in the Encyclopædia Britannica (which is an abridgment of Davidson's book); Buhl's "Canon and Text of the Old Testament"; Ryle's "Canon of the Old Testament;" Robertson Smith's "Old Testament in the Jewish Church," lects. v. and vi.; Toy's "Judaism and Christianity," pp. 68–76; Knappert's Religion of Israel," chap. xxi.; Westcott's "Canon of the New Testament."

Analogy between the Formation of the Christian and Buddhist Canons.—No little light is thrown upon the origin and collection of the New Testament writings by the account given by Max Müller of the origin of the Buddhist Sacred Writings and their formation into a canon, which I could scarcely forgive myself if I did not quote before leaving this part of my subject.

"During the life of Buddha," says Müller, "no record of events, no sacred code containing the sayings of the master, was wanted. His presence was enough, and thoughts of the future seldom entered the minds of those who followed him. It was only after Buddha had left the world to enter into Nirvana that his disciples attempted to recall the sayings and doings of their departed friend and master. Then everything that seemed to redound to the glory of Buddha, however extraordinary and incredible, was eagerly welcomed, while witnesses who would have ventured to criticise or reject unsupported statements, or detract in any way from the holy character of Buddha, had no chance of being listened to. And when, in spite of all this, differences of opinion arose, they were not brought to the test of a careful weighing of evidence, but the names of 'unbeliever' and 'heretic' were quickly invented in India as elsewhere, and bandied backwards and forwards between contending parties, till at last, when the doctors disagreed, the help of the secular power had to be invoked, and kings and emperors convoked councils for the suppression of schism, for the settlement of an orthodox creed, and for the completion of the sacred Canon. We know of King Asoka, the contemporary of Seleucus, sending his royal missive to the assembled elders, and telling them what to do and what to avoid, warning them also in his own name of the

apocryphal or heretical character of certain books which, as he thinks, ought not to be admitted into the sacred Canon."

"We here," continues Müller, "learn a lesson, which is confirmed by the study of other religions, that canonical books, though they furnish in most cases the most authentic information within the reach of the student of religion, are not to be trusted implicitly; nay, that they must be submitted to a more searching criticism and to more stringent tests than any other historical books."

In reading the above, one can hardly believe that it is not the history of the origin of our own New Testament writings and the formation of our own New Testament Canon that Professor Müller is tracing, instead of the origin of the Buddhist Sacred Writings and the formation of the Buddhist Canon. For if we substitute "Jesus" in the place of "Buddha," "the countries around the Mediterranean Sea" in the place of "India," and the "Emperor Constantine" with one or two other Christian emperors in the place of "King Asoka," we shall have an almost exact record of the origin of a large part of the literature which came into being as the result of Jesus' life and teachings, and the manner in which a portion of this became singled out from the rest, and by degrees united into essentially what is now our New Testament.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT TEXT: ITS FORMATION AND PRESERVATION.—I.

WE have seen how the different books of the Bible originated, and how they were gathered together into a sacred Canon; we must now inquire how they have been preserved and brought down to our day.

There is a popular impression existing, not quite indeed that the Bible authors wrote in English, but at least that we can trace our Hebrew and Greek Old and New Testaments straight back to the manuscripts of the inspired penmen, so that there can be scarcely more doubt about our having their precise words than there is about our having the exact words of the Declaration of American Independence, or of a book printed from an author's manuscripts yesterday. Whether this impression is correct or not, and what the facts in the case really are, it will be the aim of this chapter and the next concisely to show.

The Languages of the Bible.—In what tongues were the Old Testament books written? Mainly in the Hebrew; sections of two of the books, however, Ezra and Daniel, were written in Aramaic.[1]

What were these languages? Both were of the Semitic stock; they were about as closely related as are Eng-

---

[1] Ezra iv. 8–vi. 18, and vii. 12–26; Dan. ii. 4–vii. 28; also the interpolated verse, Jer. x. 11.

lish and German. The Hebrew was, of course, the native tongue of the Hebrew people; but it passed out of popular use three or four centuries before Christ (after the return from the exile), and was replaced by the Aramaic, which had come to be widely used as the language of travel and commerce throughout Western Asia. Most of the books of the Old Testament were written while the Hebrew was yet the spoken tongue of the people. After it had been crowded out from popular speech by the Aramaic, it still remained the literary and sacred language; hence it is not strange that essentially all the books preserved in the Canon were written in Hebrew, even those composed after the arrival of the Aramaic.

Coming to the New Testament, we find that to be written in Greek. At the first look this seems somewhat strange. Jesus and his disciples were all Jews. They unquestionably spoke Aramaic, in common with the Jews of Palestine generally. Why then was not the New Testament written in Hebrew—the Jews' sacred language, and the language of the Old Testament? Or, if not in Hebrew, then why not in Aramaic, the popular tongue?

Some of the earlier writings of Christianity undoubtedly were written in Aramaic, but these have been mainly lost. The reasons why Greek became the New Testament language are not hard to discover. They are the following:

1. Christianity soon came to be regarded, and to regard itself, as a new religion, and not simply as a sect of Judaism. Hence it is not strange that it should not have cared greatly to cling to the old sacred language.

2. It began early to push out beyond the Jews, and to find its greatest successes and strength among Gentile peoples. Hence it could hardly be willing to weight

itself with a dead language like the Hebrew, which so large a part of its adherents could not understand.

3. Most important of all, Greek had by this time become the great language of literature, of international intercourse, and largely of commerce. In Palestine it was tending to supersede Aramaic, at least among the more intelligent and wealthy classes; while throughout most of the Roman Empire it was the dominant tongue. Even the Hebrew scriptures of the Old Testament had been translated into Greek for the use of Greek-speaking Jews. It was these Greek-speaking Jews, and especially the great Greek-speaking Gentile world, that gave chief welcome to Christianity. It could not be otherwise, therefore, than that Greek should become the language of the new religion and its new sacred Scriptures.

So much for the languages in which the Old and New Testaments were originally written. Thus we see at the outset not only that all the teachings of the Bible have to come to us in English through a translation, but that the words of Jesus, the most important of the Bible teachers, having been spoken in Aramaic, and given to the world in Greek, can come to us in any modern language only through *two* translations.

What do we really know about the original Hebrew and Greek scriptures? Let us try to work our way back to those originals, beginning with the Old Testament.

Old Testament Manuscripts.—We are to-day in possession of an Old Testament text printed in Hebrew. How far back does this go? It can go only a little way, for all printing is modern. But do we not have Old Testament manuscripts? And are not these very ancient? The oldest Hebrew manuscript of the entire Old Testament that we possess goes back to the year 1009 A.D.;

and the oldest of any part of the Bible (the Prophet codex) goes back to 916 A.D.[1] Is this far? In a sense, yes. And yet how small a part is it of the whole journey back to those ancient times when the old prophets and psalmists and law-makers wrote! What of the twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen hundred years that lie still back before we reach the birth of the Old Testament books? How do we know that these relatively modern manuscripts (yet oldest that we possess) are faithful transcripts of those written so many centuries earlier by Isaiah and Jeremiah and Ezra?

Hebrew Written without Vowels.—As soon as we begin making inquiries about the original language of the Old Testament, one fact comes to light which is of immense and even startling significance. It is the fact that the Hebrew written language originally contained no vowels or vowel-marks. This, of course, means nothing less than that the Old Testament books were written simply in consonant outline, and in this form were preserved for many centuries.

True, if we take up a Hebrew Bible or manuscript now, we shall find this consonant outline filled out with dots and other marks above and below, to indicate the vowels that should be understood. But these vowel marks are no part of the original Hebrew Bible. Then men read the various books as best they could from the consonants alone, supplying the vowels according to the seeming requirement of the sense, or the oral instructions which they had received from tradition.

Uncertainty of Consonant Writing.—Try to imagine how much accuracy could be preserved to-day in writings

[1] Both are preserved in the Imperial Library of St. Petersburg.

made up solely of consonants which simply put, let us say, *bk* for book, or back, or beck; *ppr* for paper, or piper, or pepper; *pn* for pun, or pain, or pin, or pan; and so on.

That I may not convey a false impression, let me cite a word or two from the ancient Hebrew. The Hebrew word (or consonant outline of a word) *qtl* may be a noun, a verb, or a participle; and, if a verb, it may be active, passive, or reflexive; and it may have nine different meanings, according to the vowels that the reader supplies in connection with it. The Hebrew word *dbhr* may have five different meanings, to wit: "a word," "he hath spoken," "to speak," "speaking," "it has been spoken," and "a pestilence," according to the vowels we supply. This, then, is the kind of written language in which the larger part of our Bible finds itself originally recorded. As Gesenius says: "How imperfect and indefinite such a mode of writing was, is easily seen."

Prof. T. F. Curtis compares this consonant outline to the stenographic shorthand of reporters. He says: "So long as the Hebrew language was a spoken tongue, it was written without vowels or any letters being doubled. This is just the way our shorthand writers now take down speeches, and is generally sufficient to remind the reporter of a speech, the ideas of which have been distinctly and recently understood. Some years ago a friend undertook to learn shorthand. Hessian boots were worn in those days with little tassels, one in front of each. Going out hastily, this gentleman discovered that a tassel was torn off one of his boots, and to show his proficiency in the new art, he wrote his teacher, in another room, to ask: 'Have you an old boot tassel?' The vowels being all omitted, and also the doubling of the letters, signs were made for the following letters: 'Hv y n ld bt tsl,'

which his friend not unnaturally read thus: 'Have you an old boot *to sell?*' Why his pupil could want to buy an old boot from him required more explanation than shorthand could well give. Now the difficulty of the ancient Hebrew without points is just this: that, although where people were very familiar with the subject and language, this style of writing was ordinarily sufficient at least to guide the priests, and remind them of the law, so that they could explain it to the people; yet there would always be many cases where the meaning was left extremely doubtful, without the aid and authority of tradition."[1]

Says Prof. Robertson Smith on this point: "Let me ask you to realize precisely how the scribes, at and before the time of Christ, proceeded in dealing with the Bible. They had nothing before them but the bare text denuded of its vowels, so that the same words might often be read and interpreted in two different ways. A familiar example of this is given in Heb. xi. 21, where we read of Jacob leaning upon the top of his 'staff'; but when we turn to our Hebrew Bible, as it is now printed (Gen. xlvii. 31), we there find nothing about the 'staff'; we find the 'bed.' Well, the Hebrew for 'the bed' is *hammittah*, while the Hebrew for 'the staff' is *hammatteh*. The consonants in these two words are the same, the vowels are different. But the consonants only were written, and therefore it was quite possible for one person to read the word as 'bed,' as is now the case in our English Bible, following the reading of the Hebrew scribes; and for the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, on the other hand,

---

[1] "Human Element in Inspiration," pp. 170-174. See also Davidson's "Introduction to the Old Testament," vol. i. p. 107.

to understand it as a 'staff,' following the interpretation of the Greek Septuagint. Beyond the bare text, which in this way was often ambiguous, the scribes had no guide but oral teaching. They had no rules of grammar to go by; the kind of Hebrew which they themselves wrote often admitted grammatical constructions which the old language forbade, and when they came to an obsolete word or idiom they had no guide to its meaning, unless their masters had told them that the pronunciation and the sense were so and so." [1]

Adding the Vowel Points.—This was the condition in which the Hebrew written language not only was at first, but remained for many centuries. Indeed, this serious defect of the Hebrew Bible was not remedied until the seventh or eighth century after Christ, when the school of Jewish scholars known as the Massorites revised the Old Testament text with great patience, and added the vowel points according to their best ability; but they had nothing to guide them except their own judgment and very imperfect tradition, and that they made numberless mistakes every Hebrew scholar knows. Says Professor Driver: "It is true, since the rise of the school called the Massorites in the seventh and eighth centuries (and probably for parts of the Old Testament, especially the Law, from a considerably earlier date), the Jews displayed a scrupulous fidelity in the preservation and correct transmission of their sacred books; but nothing is more certain than that the period during which this care was exercised was preceded by one of no small laxity, in the course of which corruptions of different kinds found their way into the text of the Old Testament. The Jews,

[1] "Old Testament in the Jewish Church," pp. 50, 51.

when it was too late to repair by this means the mischief that had been done, proceeded to guard their sacred books with extraordinary care, with the result that corrupt readings were simply perpetuated, being placed by them (of course, unconsciously) on precisely the same footing as the genuine text, and invested with a fictitious semblance of originality."[1]

It used to be held that the vowel points were added to the Hebrew text by Ezra, in the fifth century before Christ, and that he was specially inspired of God for the work, so that he could make no mistakes. When, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this view was shown by Levita and Cappellus, in France, to be without foundation, and when it was proved that the vowel points were introduced by the Massorites more than a thousand years after Ezra, there was great excitement throughout all Protestant Europe. To many it seemed as if the new theory meant the utter subversion of religion; for if the vowel points were not given by divine revelation, but were only men's invention, and at so late a date, what dependence was there to be put upon the scripture text? The discussion kindled was one of the hottest in the history of modern biblical criticism, and lasted more than

---

[1] "Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Samuel," p. 37.

Says C. H. H. Wright: "Although the main contents of the sacred Scriptures have been well preserved, these scriptures have not come down to us in the exact shape in which they were at first written, or even as finally edited by their pre-Christian revisers. The Massorites did their best to establish a uniform text, and in doing so stereotyped not a few corruptions. And the Hebrew MSS., though substantially following the text as settled by those scholars, were, when duly examined by Kennicott, De Rossi, and others, proved to abound in mistakes." "Introduction to the Old Testament," pp. 14, 15. See chaps. iii. and iv. entire. Also see Smith's "Old Testament in the Jewish Church," lecs. ii., iii., iv., and v.

a century. But finally it ceased; the new view was accepted, and men found, many of them greatly to their astonishment, that religion was in no way injured. They had simply made again the mistake, which has been made by backward-looking men ten thousand times and in every age, of supposing that texts and sacred writings are the tree whose fruit is religion—so that to change the words is to endanger religion; when in fact religion in the living, divine soul of man is itself the tree, and texts and scriptures are simply its fruits and flowers and leaves, which may be changed or shed, and yet the tree live on and prosper, bearing other foliage and flowers and fruit, and even in increasing abundance.

Errors of Copyists.—But the inaccuracies that are found in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament are by no means all due to the want of vowel points. Many are due to the fact that it had to be copied for so many centuries by hand. We, in our age of printing, little realize what that means. It is hard enough to be accurate now; what must it have been then? Says Professor Smith: "The Bible had to be copied by the pen. Let us suppose, then, that the copyist, without any special instruction or guide, simply sat down to make a transcript, probably writing from dictation, of the MS. which he had bought or borrowed. In the first place, he was almost certain to make some slips, either of the pen or of the ear; but, besides this, in all probability the volume before him would contain slips of the previous copyist. Was he to copy these mistakes exactly as they stood, and so perpetuate the error, or would he not in very many cases think himself able to detect and correct the slips of his predecessor?

If he took the latter course, it was very possible for him to overrate his own capacity and make a new mistake. And so, bit by bit, if there were no control, if each scribe acted independently, and without the assistance of a regular school, errors were sure to be multiplied, and the text would be certain to present many variations."[1] Nor is this all. "Manuscripts were copied and recopied by scribes who not only sometimes made errors in letters and words, but permitted themselves to introduce new material into the text, or to combine in one manuscript, without mark or division, writings composed by different men."[2] It was a widespread practice to make on the edges of manuscripts notes of other matter, perhaps found in other manuscripts, that seemed relevant and important. A subsequent copyist was not unlikely to embody these in the text. And so variations and corruptions of the original text multiplied.[3]

No Early "Received Text."—It should be remembered that until after the time of Christ the Jews had no received text. Every collector and every scribe had a text of his own. How a common or received text was finally formed is not certainly known; but that it was by no adequate critical process is certain. Instead of collecting

---

[1] "Old Testament in the Jewish Church," p. 53.

[2] Toy's "Judaism and Christianity," p. 72.

[3] "The man who had bought or copied a book, . . . if he could make it more convenient for use by adding a note here, putting in a word there, or incorporating additional matter derived from another source, had no hesitation in doing so. In short, every ancient scholar who copied or annotated a book for his own use was very much in the position of a modern editor, with the difference that at that time there was no system of footnotes, brackets, and explanatory prefaces, by which the insertions could be distinguished from the original text." Robertson Smith's "Old Testament in the Jewish Church," p. 107.

all possible texts, and compiling one from these, according to sound critical rules, it is probable that the scribes chose some single manuscript as a standard, that all subsequent copies were made from this, and that all other existing texts were as far as possible destroyed. Thus, instead of giving us a text that we can rely upon, by cutting off sources of comparison they made it impossible ever to get such a text.[1]

Corruptions of the Present Hebrew Text.—As soon as we understand all these things we are no longer surprised to find, as we do find, that the text of Micah and Hosea is so corrupt as in many places to be absolutely unintelligible; or that the text of the Books of Samuel is

---

[1] "We can be sure that in the earlier centuries copies of the Bible circulated and were freely read even by learned men like the author of the Book of Jubilees, which had great and notable variations of text, not inferior in extent to those still existing in the New Testament MSS. In later times every trace of these varying copies disappears. They must have been suppressed, or gradually superseded by a deliberate effort, which has been happily compared by the German scholar Nöldeke to the action of the Caliph Othman in destroying all copies of the Koran which diverged from the standard text that he adopted. . . . This, then, was what the scribes did: They chose for us the Hebrew text which we have now got. [Of course, it is the *consonant outline* that is here referred to; that was chosen by the scribes soon after the time of Christ, as here described; the insertion of the vowel points, as we have seen, came later.] Were they in a position to choose the very best text, to produce a critical edition which could justly be accepted as the standard, so that we lose nothing by the suppression of all the divergent copies? . . . There can be no doubt that the standard copy which they ultimately selected, to the exclusion of all others, owed this distinction not to any critical labor which had been spent upon it, but to some external circumstance that gave it a special reputation. . . . The very errors and corrections and accidental peculiarities of the MS. were kept just as they stood . . . when it was chosen to be the archetype of all future copies." Robertson Smith's "Old Testament in the Jewish Church," pp. 74, 76, 80.

scarcely better;[1] or that that of other books is bad, though perhaps not quite so bad.

Fortunately, two centuries or so before Christ the translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek, known as the Septuagint, was made in Alexandria. This has enabled us to correct many errors, and will enable us to correct more still, as it is studied more carefully—such errors, of course, as have crept into the Hebrew text since that translation was made. By comparing our Hebrew text with the Samaritan Pentateuch, too, some errors have been discovered and emended. And yet, all this is really very little, and promises little. We are still in doubt about great numbers of passages all through the Old Testament, and probably we must always remain so, for want of any means of ascertaining what was the original text. Dr. Samuel Davidson, a most competent critic, in his "Revision of the Hebrew Text," cites between seven and eight thousand places where manuscripts and versions differ from our text; and in the book entitled "Anglo-American Bible Revision," written by members of the American Revision Committee in 1879, Dr. Howard Osgood, professor of Hebrew in the Rochester Baptist Theological Seminary, suggests ten thousand as the probable number of diversities of reading in the Old Testament; moreover, adding at the end the significant sentence: "It should be remembered that if for the criticism of the Old Testament we possessed a critical apparatus as full as that for the New, the number of diversities might be largely increased."

To be sure, a large part of these variations are, in themselves, of little importance, making only slight

[1] See Driver's "Notes on the Hebrew Text of Samuel."

changes in the sense, and often none at all. And yet many are important; some are very important. But, whether the importance be great or small, one thing at least these variations do—they show beyond a possibility of doubt or question that we have, and in the nature of the case can have, no perfect or infallible Old Testament Hebrew text.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT TEXT: ITS FORMATION AND PRESERVATION.—II.

Greek Manuscripts of the New Testament.—We pass now from the Hebrew of the Old Testament to the Greek of the New. What do we find here? Any greater evidences of inerrancy? Let us see.

We have a very much larger number of manuscripts of the New Testament than of the Old, and many of these go back much farther. Our five oldest and most valuable Greek manuscripts are the *Codex Sinaiticus* and the *Codex Vaticanus*, both dating from the fourth century A.D.; the *Codex Alexandrinus*, and the *Codex Ephraemi*, dating from the fifth century; and the *Codex Bezæ*, of the sixth century.

Imperfections.—These manuscripts are all written in what are known as *uncial* letters; that is, in large capitals. They are without division of words or punctuation, and in part without accents or breathings. These absences, of course, introduce something of an element of uncertainty into the meaning of many passages. The use of the uncial letters continued for some centuries, being gradually displaced by what is known as the *cursive*, or running hand, about the ninth or tenth century.

Rude and imperfect attempts at punctuation, by the use of occasional simple points or small blank spaces left in the line, began to be made in the fourth and fifth centuries. But such full punctuation as we have now was

not introduced until modern times, after the invention of printing. Breathings and accents (so necessary to a perfect Greek text) were not in general use until the seventh century.

We are likely to think of our present divisions into chapters and verses as being found in the original New Testament. But this is a mistake; the chapter divisions as we now have them were made by Cardinal Hugo in the thirteenth century, and our present verse divisions first appeared in an edition of the Latin Bible (the Vulgate) printed by Robert Stephens in 1555.

Another point is worth mentioning here. We are apt to think of the titles and subscriptions of the New Testament books as coming from the writers of the books, and hence as a part of the books themselves. But as a rule, the titles and subscriptions in the New Testament are as unreliable as those in the Old. The oldest Greek manuscripts have much shorter titles than the later, and "the subscriptions, with their would-be historical information, are not only late, but worthless."[1] Those appended to the Epistles of St. Paul, are attributed to Euthalius of Alexandria, who lived in the last half of the fifth century.

In this connection it is instructive to notice what Dr. Philip Schaff of Union Theological Seminary, New York, says, in his "Companion to the Greek Testament and the English Version," which he wrote as president of the American Bible Revision Committee. Surely here, if anywhere, we shall get a careful, thoroughly reliable, and conservative statement. Speaking of the Greek text as we have it, Dr. Schaff says: "Even if we had the apos-

[1] Robertson Smith in Encyclopædia Britannica; art. "Bible."

tolic autographs, there would be room for verbal criticism and difference in interpretation, since they, like other ancient books, were probably written as a continuous whole, without accents, with little or no punctuation, without divisions of sentences or words (except to indicate paragraphs), without titles or subscriptions, without even the name of the author unless it was part of the text itself. 'Spirit' may be the human spirit or the divine Spirit (the Holy Ghost), and the distinction which we mark by capitalizing the first letter cannot be decided from an uncial manuscript where all letters are capitals. The punctuation, likewise, can be determined not by manuscript authority, but only by the meaning of the context, and is often subject to doctrinal considerations, as notably so in the famous passage affecting the divinity of Christ (Rom. ix. 5), which admits of three, if not seven, different punctuations and constructions." [1]

How Other Errors Crept in.—We found in the last chapter, that many errors crept into the Old Testament manuscripts in connection with the work of copying. The same is true here also. Indeed, as soon as there began to be New Testament manuscripts at all, there began to be variations of texts. Irenæus, as early as the second century, alludes to the variations already appearing. Origen in the third century declares that matters are growing worse. "From this time on," says Professor Ezra Abbot, "we have the manuscript text of each century, the writings of the Fathers, the various Oriental and Occidental versions, all testifying to varieties of reading for almost every verse." How were these varieties caused? Let Professor Abbot answer: "The early

[1] Pp. 88, 89.

church did not know anything of that anxious clinging to the letter which characterizes the scientific rigor and the piety of modern times, and therefore was not so bent on preserving the exact words. Moreover, the first copies were made rather for private than for public use. Copyists were careless, often wrote from dictation, and were liable to misunderstand." [1]

Nor was this all. Here a manuscript would contain abbreviations; the next copyist in attempting to write them out would be very likely to make mistakes. Here a copyist had before him a page that was blotted, or else was dimmed by age and wear; he guessed at the doubtful words as best he could, but sometimes guessed wrong. Not infrequently copyists made what they regarded as corrections in the text, in the interest of grammar or of style; or to remove what they thought to be historical or geographical or other errors; or for the purpose of harmonizing the Gospels; or to make quotations in the New Testament agree with the Greek of the Septuagint.

It was common for owners to write on the wide margins of their manuscripts, notes of one kind or another, or matter from some other part of the Bible, or even from outside the Bible, that they thought would throw light on the text. Of course these marginal writings were liable to get copied later into the text. It is probably in this way that we must account for the first eleven verses of the eighth chapter of John's Gospel, and the last twelve verses of Mark's Gospel, neither of which passages is found in the oldest manuscripts.

So, too, the use of the various New Testament writings in *churches* caused additions sometimes to be made. For

---

[1] Schaff-Herzog Encyclopædia; art. "Bible Text."

example, if a passage were habitually used for liturgical purposes, it would be not unnatural for an appropriate *ending* to be attached to it. It was in this way, undoubtedly, that the doxology to the Lord's Prayer came into being, for it is not found in the oldest Greek manuscripts. Or if a passage torn from its context were used for an ecclesiastical lesson, it might seem necessary to preface it with a few words of explanation, and it would be easy and natural for these explanatory words by and by to get copied into the text.

Occasionally, too, interpolations were made for doctrinal purposes. Here a zealous copyist, in transcribing a passage, thinks it would be a great advantage if its doctrinal teaching were a little more explicit. He is very sure he knows what it was meant to teach. Why should not he add a few words that will make its meaning clearer? In his pious zeal he does so. It is in some such way as this, doubtless, that we must account for that famous passage in 1 John v., called the text of the three heavenly witnesses, which for centuries was regarded as the leading New Testament proof-text in support of the doctrine of the Trinity, but which the Revised Version throws out, as scholars have long known it ought to be thrown out.

Various Readings: One Hundred and Fifty Thousand.—Such, then, are some of the ways in which the vast number of different readings, which, in the early centuries, crept into the Greek text of the New Testament writings, had their origin.

How many such different readings have been discovered? The answer is startling. It is quite within bounds to say one hundred and fifty thousand. Some authorities put it higher than that; but that is the number announced to the world by the American Bible Revision Committee.

Of course, a large proportion of these are very slight, hardly worth noticing; and yet very many are not slight, as every Greek New Testament scholar knows, and as even one who is not a Greek scholar can see for himself by simply comparing an English Revised New Testament with the common version.

A New and Improved Greek Text.—One of the excellent results of modern scholarship has been the preparation of a Greek New Testament text greatly superior to that which was in the hands of King James' translators when they made our common English version in 1611. Since that date all our oldest and most valuable manuscripts have been discovered. An almost incredible amount of toil has been spent in examining these, and comparing them with one another and with early quotations from the Fathers. In this way a vast number of errors have been corrected, and little by little a Greek text has been built up which is a credit to modern learning. It is on the basis of this improved text that our English Revised Version has been made; and from this source, in the main, arises its great superiority over our common version.

Conclusion.—It must not be supposed, however, that we now have a Greek text that is perfect. No one knows so well as New Testament scholars themselves how very far from perfection it is. There still remain thousands of uncertainties, thousands of conflicting readings. Nor is there any ground for hope that it can ever be otherwise. With the still further advance of scholarship, of course, other errors will be corrected and further improvements will be made. But in the nature of the case this can go but a little way. There is no possible basis on which to build a perfect text. Go back as far as we can in any

direction, and we come not to certainties, but to uncertainties; not to readings that agree, but to those which conflict in numberless ways. If anywhere we may expect to find harmony and certainty, it is in our oldest and best manuscripts. But is there certainty here? Do these agree? It takes only a very little investigation to find out. But let the learned and careful Dr. F. H. A. Scrivener, than whom there is no higher or more conservative authority, answer. In his "Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament"[1] he writes: "The evidence of ancient manuscripts is anything but unanimous; they are perpetually at variance with each other, even if we limit the term ancient within the narrowest bounds—to the five oldest copies.[2] The reader has but to open the first recent critical work he shall meet with, to see them scarcely ever in unison; perpetually divided two against three, or perhaps four against one. All the readings these venerable monuments contain must, of course, be *ancient*, or they would not be found where they are; but they cannot be all true. So, again, if our search be extended to the versions and primitive Fathers, the same phenomenon unfolds itself, to our grievous perplexity and disappointment."

Thus, while we have a Greek New Testament text of whose general excellence we may well be appreciative—a text much purer and more reliable than our Hebrew text of the Old Testament—we do not have here, any more than there, either freedom from errors and uncertainties, or the possibility of ever attaining such freedom.

---

[1] Second Edition, London, p. 464.

[2] Those mentioned above—the *Codices Sinaiticus*, *Alexandrinus*, *Vaticanus*, *Ephraemi*, and *Bezæ*.

CHAPTER XX.

TRANSLATIONS: GIVING THE BIBLE TO THE PEOPLE.

WE have now found out how we obtained our Hebrew Old Testament and our Greek New Testament. The question remains, How did we get our Bible in English? The answer to this is an interesting and a many-sided story, which our space, however, will permit us to trace only in the briefest way.

If the different languages of the world are walls that tend to separate nations and races from one another, they are not walls that cannot be scaled or broken down.

Fortunately, literature leaps over these walls easily and goes where it will. It is able to do this by means of translations. Most of the great literature of the world is translated from language to language and thus becomes the heritage of all civilized peoples. It has been pre-eminently so with the Bible.

We have already gotten a glimpse of the Septuagint, that remarkable translation of the Old Testament into Greek a century or two before Christ, which for many centuries largely took the place of the Hebrew Bible even for the Jews themselves, and which, strange as it may seem, we find the New Testament writers generally quoting instead of the original Hebrew. Of course this wide use of the Septuagint grew out of the fact that for some centuries before and after the birth of Christianity the Greek tongue was the prevailing literary language of the circum-Mediterranean world.

By degrees, however, Latin began to take the place of

Greek. Since Rome held all the peoples of southern Europe, western Asia and northern Africa under her sway, it was inevitable that her language should come into wider and wider use. At first this use was confined mainly to civil and military affairs; from these it extended into commerce and trade; and then, as a Latin literature of importance was created by such eminent writers as Virgil, Horace, Cicero, and Livy, it began to be employed more and more for literary ends. As the new Christian movement spread throughout the Roman Empire, in many parts it came under strong Latin influence; indeed, the churches of the West seem from the first to have used the Latin tongue mainly, if not wholly. Early in the fourth century the Roman Emperor Constantine proclaimed Christianity to be the official religion of his Empire. The result of this was to make Latin once for all the Christian ecclesiastical language. Of course under these circumstances it became of the greatest importance to have the Bible translated into Latin.

The Vulgate. — The earliest Latin translation that was complete and that rose into historic importance, was that known as the Vulgate. The great historic personage connected with the Vulgate is Jerome, a distinguished scholar living in the fourth century (340 or 342 to 420 A.D.) who at the desire of Pope Damasus devoted a large part of his life to critical studies and labors in connection with the Bible, making his home for many years in Palestine. There were already Latin versions of the New Testament and of many parts of the Old, but they were very imperfect. Jerome revised the New Testament critically and began upon the Old Testament. But he soon saw that what was wanted in connection with the latter was a new translation from the original Hebrew, and not merely a

revision of translations from the Greek Septuagint. To such a new translation he devoted the later years of his life. The Vulgate, which is largely his work, slowly supplanted the earlier Latin versions, and by the beginning of the seventh century it had come into general use. At the Council of Trent, in the sixteenth century, it was made the authorized or official Latin Bible of the Roman Catholic Church.

The historical importance of the Vulgate is very great. Since the sixth century it has been the biblical standard in all Catholic Christendom. The monks of the middle ages made hundreds and thousands of copies of it, some of them of great beauty; and great numbers of these manuscripts are to-day found in private and public libraries in all parts of Europe and in the Orient. The Vulgate was early carried to England, and became the basis of Christian teaching there, and the first English Bible, that of Wycliffe (1382) was translated from it. The Vulgate was the basis of the Douai translation (1582 to 1610) which is to-day the official English Bible of the Catholic Church.

But if in the days when Latin was a living tongue, and the prevailing language of the Roman Empire, there was need for the Bible to be translated into Latin, not less, in a later age, when Latin had become a dead language, was there need for other and new translations of the Bible to be made into the tongues which had taken the place of Latin.

A number of such translations were made during the middle ages, and even earlier. In the fourth century Ulfilas translated nearly the entire scriptures into the language of the Goths. Near the beginning of the fifth century an Armenian version of the Bible was prepared for the use of Christians in Asia-Minor; and in the eighth or ninth

century a Sclavonic version for the use of the Bulgarian Slavs. No fewer than sixteen translations of the Bible into European vernaculars are known to have been made between the fourth and the end of the fifteenth century.

The Reformation. — However, it was not until nearly the time of the great Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century that the work of translating the Bible into the languages of the people began in earnest in Europe. The Protestant Reformation may well be called the Child of the Bible. Many influences united to create the Reformation; but probably the most important was the revival of Greek learning, which set great numbers of scholars in central and western Europe to the double task of studying the Bible anew, and of creating better translations of it into the vernaculars.

During the middle ages there was great darkness in Europe. There was little knowledge of any kind among the people. The Bible was shut up in monasteries and churches. The Roman Catholic Church made herself its guardian and keeper, and such knowledge of its contents as the people possessed they were compelled to receive through her priesthood. By this means she was able to preserve and to increase her influence.

Luther and his co-workers saw that if the power of Rome was to be broken, and if the reform of Christianity was to be effected, an indispensable agency in bringing about these results must be the Bible. The Bible must be unchained. It must be given to the people. Perhaps the most important of all the labors of Luther was his translation of the scriptures into the German tongue, thus opening the door for the Bible to enter every German home. This made the Reformation a popular movement as otherwise it could never have been.

Wycliffe. — The first translation of the whole Bible into English was made more than a hundred years before Luther's day, by John Wycliffe, who has been very truly called the "Morning Star of the Reformation." This early translation was a great event in the history of England, partly because it was the precursor of a long line of splendid biblical work which was to result in giving the Bible to the English people in ever more and more perfect forms as time went on, even down to our day, and partly because, even at that early date, it dealt a heavy blow to Roman Catholicism in England.

Not only was Wycliffe's Bible read widely, considering the general intellectual condition of the time, but knowledge of its contents was carried more widely still by the travelling preachers whom Wycliffe sent out to all parts of the land, to read and explain its contents to the people. In this way hundreds of thousands of men and women became acquainted with the Bible as they had never been before, and thus were made able to see for themselves how far the Church of Rome, with its hierarchy and its pomp and show, had wandered from the simplicity and purity of the gospel.

In still another way Wycliffe's English Bible was very influential. It fixed, we may almost say it created, the English language. Previous to its appearance there was a great number of English dialects but hardly an English tongue. But, from Wycliffe's day on, the language of his English Bible, the one great book of the people, came to be recognized as the language of England. "It practically unified the variously related tongues and dialects of the land, and made them one for the future use of the English speaking world." This was a service of the very highest value rendered by Wycliffe and his Bible to England.

Wycliffe's translation was a splendid beginning, but it was only a beginning. In the first place it was a translation from the Vulgate, that is to say, it was at best only a translation of a translation; but it was certain that, sooner or later, translations made from the original sources — from the Hebrew and the Greek — would be demanded by the English people. In the second place, Wycliffe's Bible was limited in its circulation as compared with later translations, because of the fact that it came into existence before the age of printing. It could be multiplied only by the slow, tedious, and expensive work of the pen, and hence could reach comparatively only a few.

Tyndale. — From Wycliffe we pass on to William Tyndale, born in the year 1484. During the hundred years intervening between the two men, wonderful things have happened in Europe. Mediæval civilization was broken up and is disappearing. The intellectual world has suffered such an upheaval as was never known. Everywhere men are beginning to think and to inquire. The cloistered, antiquated, and fettered learning of the monasteries is yielding to the fresh, new knowledge of the schools and universities. Perhaps most important of all for the cause of religion, the printing press has been invented, and is beginning to be put to use everywhere for the multiplication of copies of the scriptures. One of the very first tasks performed by Gutenberg, after his new invention was completed, was the printing of the Bible, the Latin Vulgate, entire. This was followed soon by the Hebrew Bible. Erasmus, the great scholar of the Reformation, prepared a critical edition of the Greek New Testament, and this the printing press quickly gave to the world.

Tyndale in England took up Wycliffe's Bible work where the latter had laid it down; but he did so with the

great advantage of the use of the printing press. He saw, too, that the time had come when a better version of the Bible was needed than that of Wycliffe. Wycliffe's was a translation from the Latin Vulgate, as has been already said ; but there ought to be one made directly from the original Greek and Hebrew. Such an improved translation Tyndale determined to make. Being a highly accomplished classical scholar, and at the same time being master of a singularly concise, graphic, and picturesque English style, he was remarkably well fitted for his task.

But the task was one of enormous difficulty. Besides the labor involved, which was great, there was the opposition which conservatism always places in the path of religious advance. Many said then, as many say now, " What was good enough for our fathers is good enough for us " ; or, " If we give men a new translation of the Bible differing from the old it will shake their faith in the book as the Divine word of God."

The leaders of the Roman Catholic Church for the most part went further, and opposed Tyndale because they did not want the Bible given to the people in any form.

We, in these days of religious toleration, little realize the state of things in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries. On the continent of Europe, Charles V. and Philip II. decreed death by burning to any one who presumed even to read the Bible in a language which he could understand.[1] In England, in the year 1414, a law was enacted making it a crime punishable with forfeiture of property and life to read the scriptures in the mother tongue (English). As late as 1543, Parliament decreed that no laboring man or woman " should read to themselves or to

[1] Motley's " Rise of the Dutch Republic," Vol. I. pp. 73, 228.

others, publicly or privately, any part of the Bible, under pain of imprisonment." It was under such conditions as these that Tyndale went forth to his self-imposed task of giving to the people an improved English Bible, — a task which in a few years was to cost him his life. He well knew his danger, but he did not falter. First he translated the New Testament, producing a work of great critical and literary merit for that early time. But in order to accomplish it he was obliged to leave England, and carry on his labor wheresoever he could find shelter in Holland and Germany. His translation, completed in the year 1523, was printed in Germany, whence a large edition was shipped secretly into England, hidden by friendly merchants in cases of goods.

Having finished the New Testament, Tyndale undertook the translation of the rest of the Bible. In 1530 he published a translation of the Pentateuch, and the year following another of the Book of Jonah. This was as far as he was allowed to go. His enemies caused his arrest and imprisonment. Being brought to trial, he was condemned as a heretic, and soon after burned. His last words were, " Lord, open the eyes of the King of England." His books were gathered together in quantities and burned also. But his influence could not be burned, nor could the impulse which he had given to biblical scholarship in England be arrested.

One thing for which Tyndale will forever be remembered, is the fact that his translation of the New Testament has formed the literary basis, so to speak, of all the more important translations that have followed. Thus our New Testament to-day is scarcely more than a revision of that of Tyndale. Its style, its choice of words, its noble English, in the main are Tyndale's. As a historian of the

subject has well said : "Such an influence as this upon the English Bible cannot be attributed to any other man in all the past." Nor is this all. To influence the English Bible as Tyndale did was to influence powerfully the whole literature of England. "Tyndale set a standard for the English language that moulded in part the character and style of that tongue during the Elizabethan era and all subsequent time. He gave the language fixity, volubleness, grace, beauty, simplicity, and directness,"(thus adding his own to the influence of Wycliffe, and carrying to completeness the work which Wycliffe had begun). Tyndale's influence, as a man of letters, was permanent on the style and literary taste of the English people.

CHAPTER XXI.

OUR ENGLISH BIBLE.

FROM Tyndale's day the work of giving the Bible to the English people in their own tongue went forward with increased power. To be sure there were periods of great opposition. Scholars were imprisoned or compelled to fly to other lands. Editions of the scriptures were seized and committed to the flames. But these set-backs were only temporary. The mighty forces at the heart of the Protestant Reformation on the continent were operative also in England.

During the three-quarters of a century following Tyndale's death, a number of English versions of the Bible of very different value were prepared and placed before the public. Among them were those known as "Coverdale's Bible" which, strange as it may seem, was printed and distributed with the royal approval; "Matthew's Bible," which was really the translation begun by Tyndale, completed by John Rogers and others; "The Great Bible," a revision of the preceding and its issue in a new form; "The Geneva Bible," an excellent revision of "The Great Bible," made by English scholars who had been obliged to fly to Geneva in Switzerland to escape from persecution by Queen Mary; "The Bishops' Bible," another revision of "The Great Bible," made by a considerable number of English scholars, nine of whom were Bishops of the Established Church (hence its name); and, finally, "The Douai Bible," an English version of the Vulgate prepared and

printed at Douai, Flanders, for the use of Roman Catholics in England, by English Catholics who had migrated to the Continent after the accession of Queen Elizabeth.

The "Authorized Version." — This brings us to the year 1611, when the "Authorized Version" was issued, — the Bible which has been the standard of all English speaking Protestant peoples for almost three centuries.

The reason for the preparation of this version was that none of those that preceded it were generally satisfactory to English scholars. Scholarship was advancing, and it was believed that a more perfect English Bible could be prepared than any as yet existing. To insure this desirable result, King James I, who was himself something of a Bible student, summoned a company of fifty-four (perhaps more correctly forty-seven) biblical scholars, — Anglicans and Puritans, some of them laymen, — and gave them instructions to prepare the most perfect translation (or rather revision) of the Bible possible. The competency of the revisers was undoubted. They took ample time for their task — nearly six years. The excellence of the result is known by the whole English speaking world. When the new version was completed, of course the influence of the King's name and the eminence of the scholars who had produced the revision brought to it much public favor. And yet, there was no lack of opposition from the conservatism of the time. The Geneva Bible long maintained a not unsuccessful rivalry with it. More than half a century elapsed before the new work came into general use.

For almost three centuries the Authorized, or King James' Version, of 1611, has been an English classic as well as a book of religion. "Its simple, majestic Anglo-Saxon tongue, its clear, sparkling style, its directness and

force of utterance, have made it the model in language, style, and dignity of some of the choicest writers of the last two centuries. Added to the above characteristics, its reverential and spiritual tone and attitude have made it the idol of the Christian Church, and endeared it to the hearts of millions of men and women."

Why should not this noble version remain the satisfactory and all sufficient English Bible for all time to come? Why should we hear of further translations and revisions? Why should we actually have in our hands to-day a Revised Version, prepared only a few years ago, at great expense of time and labor and money, by a large body of English and American scholars? And why should this Revised Version be seeking to supplant the older version in all our Churches, Sunday Schools and homes?

The answer is, the world moves. There has been a great advance in biblical scholarship since 1611. The patient and arduous labors of scholars have resulted in giving us a far better text, both of the Hebrew Old Testament and of the Greek New Testament, than King James' revisers knew anything about. Indeed, not one of the oldest and best Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, which all scholars now rely upon as our highest authorities, was in the hands of the men who created the Authorized Version; every one has been discovered since that version was completed. Hence, of course, it is easily within our power to-day to prepare a version of the Bible far more true to the original, and therefore far more correct, than was possible in the days of King James. These facts, even if there were no others, would abundantly justify the creation of the Revised Version.

But there are others. Important changes have taken place in the English language since 1611. All living

languages grow. Growth and decay are as much the law of speech as of trees. Great numbers of words have taken on new and different meanings since King James' day. Many other words, and not a few forms of expression, have become entirely obsolete. Thus we see that there was abundant need for a revision, to correct these imperfections of language caused by time, and to bring the Bible abreast of the English of to-day. Nor is this revision the last that will be required. Throughout all the future, so far as we can see, other revisions will be needed from time to time, if the Bible is to continue a really living book.

The Revised Version.—The movement to produce our present Revised Version was inaugurated in England in the year 1870, by officials of the Established Church. First a committee of fifty-four eminent and widely representative English scholars, and, later, another committee of thirty equally eminent and equally representative American scholars, were appointed to perform the great task. They devoted to it nearly fourteen years of careful, conscientious labor, completing and publishing the revised New Testament in 1881 and the Old Testament in 1885.

It should be added that the American Committee continued its work for several years longer, and in 1901 published under the name of the "Standard American Edition of the Revised Version," a work which embodies the fullest results of the labors of both committees, plus emendations and improvements which the American committee deemed important, but which the more conservative and less free British committee were unwilling to sanction. While the English Edition is and will continue to be prized by conservative scholars, the American Edition seems likely to become more and more the standard English Bible for

progressive and free minds, not only in America, but in all English speaking lands.

It will take time, probably a long time, for the Revised Version to come into general use; for religious progress is always slow. But the superiority of the Revised over the Authorized is so great that sooner or later the former must supplant the latter. Let us notice some respects in which it is superior.

1. As we have already seen, the Revised Version is based upon a much better original text, especially in the case of the New Testament. The Revised Version of the New Testament differs from the New Testament in the Authorized Version in more than 36,000 places. Of course this means that in nearly or quite 36,000 instances the Greek text upon which the Authorized Version was based was faulty, and that the Revised Version is able to correct these errors because, in the larger number of places, its Greek text is superior. To be sure, great numbers of these corrections are of only slight importance because the errors are trivial, as of the spelling of a word or the wrong use of a Greek accent. But if this is true, it is also true that others are of great importance.

2. The Revised Version omits passages which are known to be spurious but which the Authorized Version retains. There is a considerable number of such. That they are late interpolations is seen by the fact that our earliest and best manuscripts do not contain them. In some cases their omission or retention considerably affects the doctrinal teaching of the Bible.

3. The Revised Version is much better paragraphed than the Authorized. The old mechanical chopping up of the scriptures into chapters and verses of proximately equal length, without reference to the sense, thus breaking

in pieces sentences and paragraphs which ought to be one, is about as effective a means of preventing a right understanding of the Bible as could be devised. The Revised Version removes or pushes quite into the back-ground these mechanical, arbitrary, and misleading disruptions, and introduces in their stead such natural divisions as the subject-matter requires to make its meaning plain.

4. The Revised Version is clear from those misleading dates which so long have disfigured the margins of the Authorized Version. It is now possible for us to read the Book of Genesis without being informed that the world was created in the year 4004 B.C., and drowned by a universal Flood in the year 2349 B.C.

5. The Revised Version is also free from the old chapter-headings, many of which were equally false and misleading. In some editions of the Revised Version, chapter-headings are provided, but they are new, and descriptive of what the chapters really contain.

6. Quotations made by New Testament writers from the Old Testament, are indicated in the Revised Version as quotations. This makes many passages much more intelligible.

7. The Revised Version (at least the American Revised Version) leaves out all obsolete words, giving in their place words in current use to-day, which everybody can understand. The number of improvements of this kind which it introduces into the Bible is very large.

8. In literary form, the Revised Version is vastly superior to the Authorized. For example, all those books and parts of books of the Bible which are poetry, the Revised Version prints as poetry, as it ought; whereas in the Authorized Version they always have been and still are printed as prose. This change is a very great improve-

ment in literary form. It makes the Bible more attractive, and it helps us to understand what it really is as literature. One wonders that the world has so long endured the old disfigurement and degradation of all the Bible's poetical books and portions.

These illustrations show how greatly superior is the Revised Version to that which it is designed to supersede, and how many and strong are the reasons why all lovers of the Bible and of truth should give it their support.

And yet we must not suppose that the Revised Version is a finality. Great as is its excellence, no scholar claims that it is perfect. As has already been said, there will be other revisions. There will be other translations. The motto must still be, Forward! Indeed, several revisions and translations have already been made of the whole Bible or of parts, which, in some of their features, are superior to the Revised Version, and which may well be used as supplementary to that.

In 1869, Prof. George R. Noyes, of Harvard University, published a translation of the New Testament and much of the Old, which was of great excellence and permanent value.

Much more recent is the unique "Polychrome Bible," so called because the eminent scholars who projected it have sought by means of different color to represent the different component elements, or literary "strata," so to speak, of the various books. No other translation, indeed, no other work of any kind, gives the student so clear and vivid an idea of the extent to which the biblical writings are composites, mosaics, collections of literary and historic material, which grew by repeated compilations, editings, and additions of part to part, as this notable production.

Another translation that is quite worthy of notice is the

"Twentieth Century New Testament," a work which, by rendering the New Testament writings into the language of to-day, imparts to them new vividness, and, to many minds, new interest and power.

In this connection, Professor Moulton's "Bible for Modern Readers" may be mentioned. This work is not a new translation (it employs the English Revised Version), but it is a new arrangement of the sacred writings, prepared with great skill and literary insight, and of a character to make the Bible intelligible and attractive to many to whom in its old form it has been unattractive, if not unintelligible. Possibly the literary rearranging and editing are sometimes carried so far as to seem overdone and artificial, but at least they are remarkably suggestive. Matthew Arnold wrote with much learning and intelligence to convince us that the Bible is "literature, not dogma." Professor Moulton edits its various books with such literary skill and charm, and places them before us in such attractive literary form, as to make us see as we have never seen before, that they are primarily literature, — many of them beautiful, noble and great literature. Perhaps no other scholar has done so much to give the English Bible a worthy literary form, and to lift it up to its proper place as a great literary classic.

Such are some of the signs, appearing in many quarters, which indicate that a greater day than it has yet known is dawning for the English Bible.[1]

---

[1] For further information regarding Bible texts, manuscripts, translations, revisions, and versions, see "The Ancestry of Our English Bible," by Prof. Ira A. Price, 1907.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE MORAL AND RELIGIOUS PROGRESS TRACEABLE IN THE BIBLE.

It is common to think of the religion of the Bible as being all one and the same, from Genesis to Malachi, and from Matthew to Revelation. The various scripture writers are commonly read, accepted, and quoted as if all were equally wise, as if all held and taught the same views of truth, as if all were on a level as to reliability and authority. Nothing in the Bible itself justifies this conception, the influence of which is confusing and harmful in the highest degree. The religion taught in the Bible is all "one and the same" only in the sense that the acorn and the oak are one and the same, or that the immaturity of the child and the wisdom of the man are one and the same. There is a veil over the eyes of every theory of biblical interpretation which does not see in the religion which the Bible portrays a flowing stream, broadening and deepening as it advances. The Bible is a panorama of religious progress. It deals with life, not death; therefore it is a record of growth, for life never stands still. It is the history of a moral and religious development, the most remarkable of which we have any knowledge, carried on on the scale of a whole nation, extending not through a single generation only, but through forty generations—a period of time as long as from Charlemagne to the present day—and presenting with photographic exactness every phase of individual and

national progress from the crude child-state to a rich maturity. It is this that makes the Bible so living, so fresh, so inexhaustible, so full of interest and power—a book for all times and all peoples; a world-book as no other volume, sacred or profane, is.

This religious and moral growth which appears in the Bible reveals itself in many different forms of manifestation. Let us glance at some of the more important of these.

Progress in the Conception of God.—The Old Testament portrays the growth of a people from polytheism to monotheism; from the worship of gods, cruel and vengeful, represented by various images, up to a very pure and lofty spiritual worship. This growth is harder to trace, because the books do not stand in the Bible in the order of their dates, and some that deal with very early times were written late. Still, with care, we are able to get at the facts. Little in the Pentateuch is historic. That the Ten Commandments, however, in some form, longer or shorter, came from Moses, may be asserted as possible. But even in these we find an intimation that other gods were believed in and recognized besides Jahveh. The Decalogue does not begin, "I, the Lord, am the *only* God." It begins, "I am the Lord *thy* God." And the command that Jahveh lays upon the people seems to be simply, that they shall worship *him*, not the others. *He* is *their* God; he has done much for them, brought them out of the land of Egypt, etc.; hence they shall be true to him, and "have no other gods before" him.

All through the Pentateuch, and in many other parts of the Old Testament, the Hebrew word Elohim (a plural form) is much used for God. Why a plural? It seems

to be a reminiscence of a time when it was common for men to think and speak of "gods," not of a single deity. And such passages in the Book of Genesis as, "Let *us* make man," "Behold, the man is become as one of *us*," "Ye shall be as *gods*," have a polytheistic sound. Even as late as Elijah, we find the thought of that prophet to be, not that Jahveh is the god of the whole world, or the only god, but that he is "God *in Israel*."[1] And, later still, we find the writer of the eighty-sixth Psalm declaring: "Among the gods there is none *like unto thee*, O Jahveh."[2]

Polytheism and idolatry are deeply rooted in the thought and sentiment of the early Hebrew people. To eradicate them, and to educate the nation up to the higher religion which will come by and by, the seed of which has been planted by Moses, will take many centuries.

The Book of Judges tells us that when the Israelites entered the land of Canaan, they proceeded almost at once to engage in the worship of the peoples who lived there—the Canaanites, the Hittites, and the Amorites[3]—probably in addition to their worship of their own God Jahveh. The same book also tells us that at that time graven and molten images, ephods and teraphim, were part of an equipment of a priest of Jahveh.[4] Even King Solomon offered sacrifices unto "Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites," and "built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Molech the abomination of the children of Ammon."[5] Indeed, of thirty-seven

---

[1] 1 Kings xviii. 36. [2] Verse 8. [3] Judg. iii. 5, 6.
[4] Judg. xvii. 3–5, 13. [5] 1 Kings xi. 5, 7.

kings of Israel and Judah, beginning with Saul and ending with Josiah, thirty-one were open worshippers of other gods than Jahveh. When we read of the worship of the golden calf in the wilderness, in the time of Aaron, we are apt to think of that as a solitary instance in Hebrew history; but the truth seems to be, that this form of worship was practiced even as late as the time of Jeroboam II.[1] Kuenen argues with great force, that for several centuries, indeed until near the time of the captivity, Jahveh was extensively worshipped under the form of a bull.[2] And on the general subject of the early religion of the Jews, he says: "At first the religion of Israel was polytheism. During the eighth century before Christ the great majority of the people still acknowledged the existence of many gods, and, what is more, they worshipped them. And we can add that during the seventh century and down to the beginning of the Babylonish exile (586 B.C.) this state of things remained unaltered. Jeremiah could say to his contemporaries without fear of contradiction: 'According to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah!'"[3]

The truth seems to be that polytheism, idolatry, and the use of images were not finally put away, and the popular religion of Israel did not become really and permanently monotheistic, until the period of the Exile. So great was the task, and so long an education did it require, to make over the religious conceptions and sentiments of a people.

Nor was the development *simply* up to *monotheism*. What was even more important, it was up to *ethical* monotheism.

---

[1] See 1 Kings xii. 26–33.

[2] "Religion of Israel," vol. i., pp. 235–6, 345–6.

[3] Idem. vol. i., p. 223.

It is difficult for us to-day to understand all that this means—difficult because we so little realize how low was the popular conception of the character of God entertained by the Hebrew people at the beginning of their national career. In those parts of the Old Testament which portray the earlier thought and life, God is not only represented as walking, talking, having bodily form; coming down from the sky to see what men are doing; "wrestling with one patriarch, eating veal and cakes with another;" contending, and for a while in vain, with the magic of other gods; but he is portrayed as getting angry, being jealous, repenting, deceiving, sanctioning fraud, commanding shocking cruelties, exhibiting almost every passion and imperfection of man. Not only are vast numbers of cruel and bloody animal sacrifices offered to him, but there are distinct traces of human sacrifice. The story of Abraham, commanded by Jahveh to offer up his son Isaac, is familiar to all. True, in this case we are told that the sacrifice was not actually made, but we have a definite command from Jahveh to make it, and we see Abraham attempting in earnest to carry out the command.[1]

A case in which the victim was actually slain is that of Jephthah's daughter. Jephthah promises Jahveh a human sacrifice, and fulfils that promise in the immolation of his own child.[2] Says Kuenen: "Human sacrifice occurs not unfrequently in the worship of Jahveh. When Micah introduces one of his contemporaries, a worshipper of Jahveh, speaking thus:

> 'Shall I give my first-born for my transgression,
> The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?'

[1] Gen. xxii. [2] Judg. xi. 30–40.

it is undoubtedly implied that in his day such a sacrifice was not looked upon as at all unreasonable. Human sacrifice appears as an element of the bull-worship in the kingdom of the ten tribes; David seeks to avert Jahveh's anger, by the death of Saul's progeny;[1] Samuel hews Agag the king of the Amalekites in pieces *before the face of Jahveh* at Gilgal."[2]

It was from such conceptions of God and worship as are portrayed here, that the development of the Hebrew religion proceeded. Are we shocked when we thus discover pictures of a God who is almost without moral character, and who is pleased with the sacrifice of human life? Let us not forget that we are here at the beginning of the Bible's religion, not at its end. It is the glory of the Bible that it gives us the record of a people's *progress from* all this, *up to* the God of the Prophets, whose law is righteousness, and whose service is doing justly and loving mercy; indeed, from all this up to the God of Jesus, whose name is Our Father, and whose worship is love.

Growth of the Belief in Immortality.—We find in the Bible, as we advance from the earlier to the later writings, great progress of thought regarding the doctrine of immortality. The New Testament is full of this doctrine. As to the Old Testament, it is a question among scholars whether it can be said to be taught there or not. Most of the books, particularly the older ones, are silent on the

---

[1] 2 Sam. xxi. 1–14.

[2] 1 Sam. xv. 33. On the general subject of the offering of human sacrifices among the ancient Hebrews, see Kuenen's "Religion of Israel," vol. i. pp. 237, 250–252; Kalisch's "Commentary on Leviticus," Part I., pp. 248–253; "Bible for Learners," vol. i. pp. 26, 146–149, 319, 320, 410; vol. ii. 16, 17, 299, 300, 402, 509.

subject. The religion of ancient Israel was pre-eminently a religion of this world. Its interests were here; it looked for its rewards and its penalties here. In some quarters there appears to have been thorough-going disbelief in any hereafter for man. Says the skeptical author of the Book of Ecclesiastes: "The dead know not anything, neither have they any reward." "That which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast." Dean Stanley thinks the doctrine of a future life is not taught in any except the later books; in these, however, he is sure that he finds it. Professor Toy examines the principal passages in the Old Testament which are claimed as teaching the doctrine, and decides that if we mean by immortality a conscious, intelligent, active life of hopes and interests, rewards and punishments, then none of these passages teach it.[1] What he finds taught in the Old Testament, and believed in generally among the ancient Jews, is an existence for man beyond the grave, but so shadowy, unsubstantial, and devoid of pleasure, that it ought not to be called immortality. He finds what he calls "the old Semitic conception of a colorless existence in Sheol—a gloomy underworld with gates and bars, tenanted by joyless shades, whose existence runs a gray, uncheckered course, unillumined by the ordinary emotions of men, unstimulated by their ordinary aims and hopes, severed from the life of the great world above, and cut off from living communion with God."[1] He believes that the first Jewish book that teaches the doctrine of immor-

[1] "Judaism and Christianity," pp. 379–382.

tality in any adequate sense is the apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon,[1] written about 100 B.C., a book which, by what seems a strange and unaccountable unwisdom, was not allowed a place in the Canon. The Book of Daniel, written about 165 B.C., seems to teach the doctrine in a way; and most scholars hold that certain passages in the Psalms teach it somewhat clearly.

But, whatever our decision may be about the Old Testament, when we pass on to the New all doubt is removed. Here we find the doctrine of a life to come, shining from almost every page. Perhaps no single New Testament teaching is more conspicuous, as certainly none is more inspiring.

Rise of the Belief in Satan.—It is not to be wondered at if change, or the coming of what is new into the Bible, does not always indicate progress. The advent of the doctrine of the existence of Satan is a conspicuous case in point. This doctrine is absent from those books of the Old Testament which we know to be the oldest; namely, the eighth and seventh century prophecies. Indeed, it appears only in the books written during or after the Captivity. Even if we admit that the serpent in the Genesis paradise story ought to be identified with Satan, we have here no exception, for it should be borne in mind that the Book of Genesis was probably not completed before about the beginning of the fifth century before Christ, a century after the Captivity closed. Satan appears in the Books of Job, Zechariah, and Chronicles; but these are all late writings. Belief in the existence of such a bad being—the foe of God, the accuser of the good, the tempter of men to evil—seems to have come into Judaism

[1] "Judaism and Christianity," p. 378. [2] Idem, p. 386.

from the religion of the Persians, through contact with that people during or after the Exile.

In the appearance of this new belief we find an instructive explanation of that strange contradiction which appears between the two accounts of the numbering of Israel found in the Books of Samuel and Chronicles.[1] The record in Samuel tells us that it was the *Lord* who tempted David to do the numbering; that in Chronicles says it was *Satan.* The explanation is evidently this: Samuel is the older book by two or three centuries. At the time it was written the belief in such a being as Satan was unknown, and evil, as well as good, was referred to God as its author. But by the time Chronicles was compiled, belief in Satan had come in, and he, not God, was now held to be the instigator of evil. Hence an event which in the earlier book was naturally ascribed to God, was now as naturally ascribed to Satan.

Belief in the existence of Satan appears in many of the New Testament books; in some, like the Apocalypse, it is prominent.

Thus we see that change in thought found in the Bible does not always mean advance in truth; it may mean temporary retrogression, or the coming in of a superstition. The main movement, however, in both the Old Testament and the New, is undoubtedly progressive, in the direction of larger and higher truth and life.

Moral Progress.—Perhaps no form of advance seen in the Bible is more striking than that which appears in its moral teachings. To be sure, we are very likely to be blinded to this, by seeing at the beginning of the volume, as we read it, the tale of a paradise garden and of a sup-

---

[1] 2 Sam. xxiv. 1, and 1 Chron. xxi. 1.

posed perfect man and woman, and such idyllic pictures of life as those of the patriarchs. But as soon as we put all this apart by itself, as we must, as legend and poetry, and not historic fact, and remember that our earliest reliable picture of Hebrew life is that which we have in the Books of Judges and Samuel, then we are prepared to discover the moral progress which comes so clearly to view in the career of Israel.

The Israelitish people when they emerge from the shadow of the pre-historic time—say in the eleventh or twelfth century before Christ—have advanced as yet hardly beyond a half-civilized state. They have no settled government; lawlessness and cruelty abound. We have only to read the accounts that come down to us from those times, of assassinations like those committed by Ehud [1] and Jael;[2] brutalities like those practiced upon Adoni-bezek and the seventy kings;[3] debaucheries like those of Samson;[4] Samuel's words to Saul as he went away to battle: "Spare no Amalekite, slay man and woman, infant and suckling;"[5] and the wholesale massacres of women and innocent children reported in connection with the conquest of Canaan,[6] to see what a long road Israel had to travel before reaching the noble ethics of the Prophets and Job and Ecclesiasticus, not to say of Paul and Jesus.

Perhaps no one ever pictured that long and splendid advance more vividly than Jesus himself, when, in the Sermon on the Mount, he said: "Ye have heard that it hath been declared [by them of old time], Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto

[1] Judg. iii. 21. [2] Judg. iv. 21. [3] Judg. i. 6, 7.
[4] Judg. xvi. [5] 1 Sam. xv. 3.
[6] Deut. xx. 16, 17; Josh. viii. 18–29; x. 28–41; Num. xxi. 35; xxxi. 17, 18.

you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you." "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil." If we turn to the Book of Exodus, where this last passage quoted by Jesus stands, we find it reading, in its fuller form, "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe;"[1] or if we turn to Deuteronomy, we find a similar passage: "Thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot."[2] From such teachings as these, to Christ's "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you;" or to Paul's "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; overcome evil with good," is about as long an ethical journey as it is possible for us to conceive.

No intelligent and honest man can deny that sanction is to be found in parts of the Old Testament for slavery, for polygamy, for revenge, for deceit, for the putting to death of witches, for war, for the indiscriminate slaughter of captives taken in war, and for other evils. Are these evils good, then? Certainly not. Then must we throw the Bible away as an untrustworthy guide? An untrustworthy guide it most certainly is if we see in it no growth, and accept all parts of it as of equal value and authority. It is this kind of interpretation that has in all ages turned it into an armory from which to draw texts for the de-

---

[1] Exod. xxi. 24, 25. It is, perhaps, worthy of notice that this is part of what is known to scholars as the "Book of the Covenant" (Exod. xx.–xxiii.), which is undoubtedly an ancient code, going back, perhaps, nearly or quite to the time of Moses, which has been preserved and inserted into the Pentateuch at this point.

[2] Deut. xix. 21.

fence of every kind of cruelty, superstition, and wrong. It is only as we recognize it as a book of growth and progress, and take as our guide its best and highest teachings, not its lowest and worst, what it has grown *to*, not what it has grown *from*, that it becomes a safe and valuable guide.

CHAPTER XXIII.

RELIGIOUS EVOLUTION: A HISTORICAL SUMMARY.

PERHAPS the whole subject of the moral and religious progress traceable in the Bible, or, to put it in other words, of the evolution of the religion of Israel, may be best shown by a brief historical summary. For such a summary a few introductory words will prepare the way.

Under the old views of the Bible, that is, under the views which prevailed before the advent of modern biblical scholarship, or what is known as the higher criticism, it was not possible to find in the Bible, or at least in the Old Testament, anything which could properly be called moral and religious progress on any considerable scale; there was no evidence that the religion of Israel was an evolution.

This was because we were under the delusion of radically false ideas as to the origin and age of many of the biblical books, and consequently fundamentally erroneous views of Israel's national and religious history. Much that was really earliest we thought latest, and much that was really latest we thought earliest. Of course this created confusion everywhere. The old view of the Bible, founded on tradition and imagination, which regarded the world as created six thousand years ago (instead of millions of years, as we now know), and Genesis as the earliest book of the Old Testament (instead of one of the latest), and the so-called Mosaic laws as written by Moses (instead of seven or eight centuries after Moses' death), distorted and re-

versed the history of the Hebrew people in much the same way that the history of a man would be distorted and reversed if we had the doings of his childhood presented to us as those of his mature years, and the events of his old age represented as those of his youth.

Not until the new biblical scholarship came on the scene was there any light. But the patient researches of a hundred years, carried on in many lands, has at last brought order out of chaos. It has given us the essential facts as to the origin of the various biblical writings. As a result, we now know which are history and which are not. We know which are earlier and which later in date. We can now trace the real history of the Hebrew religion and the Hebrew people, — not indeed from Adam and a Paradise garden, or from Noah, or even from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; for all the far-off region represented by these names we now understand is one of legend, tradition, and dream, — but we can trace it with a considerable degree of certainty from Moses, and with much clearness from David and Solomon, on and down to the age of the New Testament.

And what does that history show? Confusion, decadence, retrogression? No. It shows order, sequence, continuity, the operation of the laws of historic cause and effect, and a remarkable progress. The progress was not uniform, it was not uninterrupted, — no human progress ever is, — but it was real, persistent, never long checked, and in its results extraordinary. We now see that the religion of the Hebrew people in Palestine was a growth as natural as the growth of a tree; a development which at last we are able to trace almost as clearly as we can trace the development of the Papacy in the middle ages, or of Protestantism in modern times; an evolution of un-

surpassed interest which has exerted an influence upon the world probably greater than any other religious evolution known.

We are now ready for our historic epitome or summary. If we find it taking us to some slight extent over ground already trodden, at least it will be by a somewhat different path, and with somewhat different ends in view.

In the preceding chapter we found moral and religious evolution in the Bible to be a fact, — in the light of the new biblical knowledge, a conspicuous fact. In the brief epitome which follows, the aim will be to trace the various steps of that evolution in their order, and to obtain a connected view of the whole.

Earliest Beginnings — before Moses. Conditions from which the Evolution Arose. — The earliest ancestors of Israel of whom we are able to get any trace are Semitic tribes, — seemingly some of them held in temporary bondage in Egypt, perhaps others wandering nomads in Arabia. Their civilization is low, their morals are crude, they are polygamists, their worship is fetichistic and polytheistic, their gods are fierce nature forces. Human sacrifices are not unknown among them.

From Moses to David (1300 to 1000 B.C.). — Under the leadership of Moses, Jehovah (Yahveh) becomes Israel's tribal god, the tribes swearing allegiance to him at Sinai. He is cruel and vindictive, but certain moral elements come early to be associated with his character. He is represented by no image; the "Ark" is his home. While it is thought proper for other nations and peoples to worship their own tribal or national gods, the people of Israel are forbidden to worship any god but their own. The tribes invade Canaan, which they regard as their "Promised Land," — promised them by Jehovah. The

conquest of the country proceeds slowly. The wars carried on are brutal. There is much massacring of conquered enemies, women and children as well as men, at the reputed command of Jehovah. By degrees the nomadic gives place to the settled agricultural life. Gradually the tribes draw nearer together. Social life and moral conditions somewhat improve. But there is still much worship of idols and of Canaanitish gods. Jehovah himself is worshipped under the form of a bull.

From David Onward (1000–586 B. C.). — Under Saul and David the tribes are consolidated and become really a nation. David and Solomon build in Jerusalem a Temple to Jehovah; yet the worship of other gods flourishes. There are even horrid rites (including the offering of children) to Molech. The prophets arise, — Elijah and Elisha (9th century B.C.), Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, and others (8th century), — leading in a fierce war against idolatry. It is "Jehovah against Baal!" The prophets more and more emphasize the moral element in religion, and declare Jehovah to be a stern and holy god, demanding Justice and Truth. There is a partial reformation under King Hezekiah (about 710 B.C.), and a more effectual one under King Josiah (621); and yet the old evils tenaciously persist.

The Captivity in Babylon (586–536).—The hard and bitter experiences of the Captivity, like purifying fires, finally destroy idolatry; and from this time on Jehovah is the sole object of worship. The influence of the priests increases. Priestly laws are elaborated. The prophets, particularly the "Great Unknown," the so-called "Second Isaiah," comfort the people and keep alive their hope of return to their own land. The character of Jehovah is elevated and more fully endowed with ethical elements.

He begins to be thought of as not confined to Israel, but as the God of the whole earth. He is becoming a God of love. Worship grows more pure and spiritual.

From the Captivity to Jesus (536–5 B. C.). — A company of zealous Jews return from Babylon to Jerusalem; they rebuild the Temple and then the walls of the city. Under the influence of Ezra legalism becomes dominant. Priestly regulations multiply. The authority of Moses is exalted. The canon of "The Law" is established; thus Bible-making begins. The Temple-worship is greatly elaborated; rites and forms increase; at the same time many noble religious hymns (preserved in our Book of Psalms) are composed. The Church absorbs the State. Prophet religion gives way to priest religion. The eyes of the people are more and more turned to the past. The religion of Israel becomes "Judaism," — founded on a Book.

Yet synagogues multiply, and their influence is liberalizing. Noble protests against the growing ecclesiasticism and pleas for freedom and breadth are written, like the Books of Ruth and Jonah. "Other-world" ideas come in from Persia. The broadening influence of Greek culture is felt. Under the stimulus of Greek thought there is a rich development of "Wisdom Literature," as seen in the Books of Proverbs and Job, and the apocryphal Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom of Solomon. The Jewish Sects (Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes) arise and become influential. A second sacred canon, that of "The Prophets," is formed. The fires of patriotism, love of freedom, and zeal for the national religion blaze high under the heroic Maccabees. The "Messianic Hope" is kindled in many quarters. Apocalyptic books, like Daniel and Enoch, are written, adding to the flame of that hope. Many psalms, some of them breathing a spirit of universality and of deep spirit-

uality are written. The tallest souls are coming to think of Jehovah as a "Father." While in some quarters there are intense fanaticism and intolerance, in others there is a growing spirit of cosmopolitanism such as no previous age has known. The thought is arising in many minds that Israel has a mission to the world; that Israel's God is also the God of the Gentiles, and that Israel's faith should be given to all nations. Lofty, ethical, and spiritual ideas, much like those which soon will be preached by Jesus, are being taught by Rabbi Hillel and others, and they find a wide welcome. Many influences are preparing the way for a movement like that which Jesus will inaugurate.

Jesus and the New Testament. Culmination of the Evolution.—It is plain that the men who received the message of Jesus and gave it to the world were much inferior to their Master in their religious insight. Only imperfectly did they understand him (the fate of all greatest teachers). His utterances as transmitted to us are fragmentary, more or less distorted, and mixed with much that cannot have come from him. And yet much is clear. In him the prophetic spirit of the Old Testament finds a glorious rebirth. He is in the line of Amos, Hosea, and the Second Isaiah, and he surpasses, overtops his predecessors. His religion is the best religion of his people carried to a still more complete development. He is not free from the limitations of his time, as is seen in his belief in demon-possession, the speedy approach of the "end of the world," and much else. But he is a spiritual seer, a great prophet soul, a religious reformer with a burning message, a mighty lover of men, truly a "teacher sent from God."

His all-overmastering thought is love. His central gospel is, God is the universal Father and all men are

brothers. His aim, from which he never swerves, is the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven (the reign of love and purity and peace) in the hearts of men. His mountain-summit teachings are the Beatitudes, the Lord's Prayer, "love your enemies," the Golden Rule (indeed the whole Sermon on the Mount), "I was hungry and ye gave me meat," "whoso would be great let him be a servant," the two Great Commandments, the parables of the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son, and his own prayer in Gethsemane, "Father, not my will but thine be done." In Jesus the splendid line of Israel's prophets culminates. In his teaching and life the religion of the Bible finds its finest efflorescence. His gospel of God's Fatherhood and Man's Brotherhood is the climax and consummation of Israel's ethical and spiritual evolution of more than twelve centuries.

We shall never understand the religion of the Bible until we learn to conceive of it as an evolution, and the Old and New Testaments as the many-sided and many-voiced literature in which all phases and stages of that evolution from lowest to highest are portrayed.

Where, then, in the Bible shall we go for ethical standards, for true views of God, for just rules of life and conduct? To all parts alike? Certainly not. To the lowest? Never. Where then? To the best, and to these alone. Always to those parts which show the evolution most advanced, highest, nearest its completion. In the Old Testament to the greatest of the Prophets, and to the loftiest and purest of the Psalms. In the New Testament to the highest utterances of Paul and John and James, but above all, to Jesus. And even in Jesus there are better and best. We must go to the best even in the Gospels.

CHAPTER XXIV.

BIBLE INFALLIBILITY IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN SCHOLARSHIP.—I.

Is the Bible infallible? Or, to use a word that is preferred in some quarters, Is the Bible inerrant?

Hardly any questions of our day are being asked by so many persons as these. Hardly any are being asked so earnestly. What answer has scholarship to make?

Happily, so far as biblical scholarship is independent, honest, and competent (and no other is worth considering), its answer to these questions is at last becoming clear, even if it has not been clear in the past.

Such scholarship no longer hesitates to subscribe to the language of Professor Briggs when he says: "So far as I can see, there are errors in the scriptures that no one has been able to explain away; and the theory that they were not in the original text is sheer assumption, upon which no mind can rest with certainty. If such errors destroy the authority of the Bible, it is already destroyed for historians. Men cannot shut their eyes to truth and fact. But on what authority do these theologians drive men from the Bible by this theory of inerrancy? The Bible itself nowhere makes this claim. . . . It is a ghost of modern evangelicalism to frighten children." [1]

Let us see exactly the grounds upon which scholars

[1] Inaugural Address (Jan. 20, 1891), p. 35.

make such declarations as this of Dr. Briggs. To some extent these grounds have been set forth already; for if a tithe of what has been said in the preceding pages is true, there is not even a possibility that the Bible is infallible or inerrant. Yet the long array of facts that has already passed before us is but a small part of the evidence that quickly accumulates as soon as we are willing really to think and inquire.

We have taken up the subject of the origin of the various books of the Old Testament and the New. We have inquired when they were written, how they were written, who wrote them? Have we found our answers such as to give us ground for believing in the infallibility of their *origin?* We have inquired how the various books were gathered together into a *sacred Canon.* Did we find no evidences of human imperfection *here?* We have inquired about the original *text*—how it was produced, and how it has been preserved and handed down. Has the text been guarded against the possibility of error? Then come the *translations.* Have these been governed by supernatural wisdom? Yet *all* this is necessary to insure us an *infallible Bible to-day.* If a single link breaks in all this two-thousand-years'-long chain of infallible production and transmission, then, whatever our theories may be, as a fact the Bible which we hold in our hand to-day is not infallible.

Sixty-six Infallible Books?—We must not forget that even if we could prove the infallibility of one, or a score, of the books of the Bible, that would not establish the infallibility of the rest. For, as we have seen, originally the books were not together. There is no way of establishing the infallibility of the Bible as a whole, only by establishing the infallibility of each and every one of

the books that make it up. If I have in my library sixty-six miscellaneous volumes of prose and poetry, history, biography, letters, etc., written in three or four different countries, and by men of all grades of character and culture, some of them living ten centuries apart, will the fact that I may be able to prove a certain thing about one or more of the volumes justify me in claiming that I have proved it concerning all? Very well, we have found the Bible to be such a library of sixty-six miscellaneous books, of various and, for the most part, utterly unconnected origin. Every book, therefore, which has a place in it, stands or falls by itself. The various books are not a whit more related to each other than they would be if they were printed and bound as sixty-six different and distinct volumes, each under its own separate name. The real question then is not as to *one* infallibility, but as to *sixty-six* infallibilities.

But a large number of the most serious difficulties in the way of believing in the infallibility of the Bible I have not yet mentioned at all. I should be inexcusable if I did not point out some of the more prominent of these, so that it may be seen as plainly as possible how increasingly hopeless a task candid men, who think and investigate, are finding they have before them, in this age of growing knowledge, when they undertake to keep their belief that the Bible is a book which contains no mistakes and no imperfections. The following points I mention without stopping to elaborate them more than in the briefest manner.

1. **The Doctrine of Infallibility not Found in the Bible.**—The Bible itself does not claim to be free from error. While in places certain claims of superior inspiration and guidance of God are doubtless put forth, there is no

place in which the claim is made that the Bible as a whole, or even any considerable part of it, is infallible. Among the scripture passages that are quoted in support of the infallibility theory, the following is conceded by every writer, so far as I know, to be the strongest; to wit: "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."[1] But as soon as we begin to look at this passage carefully, two or three things appear, which rob it wholly of value as proof that the Bible is infallible. (1) It says nothing about infallibility: it speaks only of inspiration. Nor are the two necessarily connected. For Peter and Paul, who are regarded as inspired men, confess that they make mistakes. If, then, inspired men may err, why not an inspired book? (2) At the time this Epistle to Timothy was written, there was no New Testament. The collection of writings which we know by that name was not made until long after. The only sacred Scripture known to the Christians at that time was the Old Testament. The "all scripture" referred to, therefore, of course meant Old Testament scripture. So, then, even if this passage proved infallibility at all, it would be only of the Old Testament. (3) But that it does not prove that, or anything looking in that direction, is seen as soon as we get a correct translation. It has long been known to scholars that the rendering in our common version is wrong. The Revised Version gives it correctly, as follows: "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for intsruction," etc. That this teaches Bible infallibility, nobody can claim.

---

[1] 2 Tim. iii. 16.

Another passage sometimes quoted to prove the Bible infallible is this from Second Peter: "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." It should be borne in mind that this Epistle (as has been shown in a preceding chapter) is almost certainly not from Peter at all, but is a non-apostolic writing of the middle of the second century. Its claim, therefore, to be in the New Testament is of the poorest. But even if we admit it to be genuine scripture, what then? It says nothing about Bible infallibility. It makes no claim concerning the Bible of any kind. In affirming that "holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit," it simply affirms the great truth of the living inspiration of God in the soul of man, something as true of our time as of any time in the past, and having no necessary connection with any book.[1]

---

[1] "The frequent use in the Old Testament of such solemn phrases as 'Thus saith the Lord;' 'And God said;' 'And God spake these words and said;' and verses which tell us that 'All scripture is given by inspiration of God;' that 'holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,' form one of the chief foundations on which the claim (that the Bible is infallible) is rested. Upon the use of the phrases quoted, some very instructive facts are given by Sir Samuel Baker in his book on the 'Nile Tributaries.' He says (pp. 129–131): 'The conversation of the Arabs is in the exact style of the Old Testament. The name of God is coupled with every trifling incident in life. Should a famine afflict the country, it is expressed in the stern language of the Old Testament: "*The Lord hath sent* a grievous famine upon the land." Should their cattle fall sick, it is considered to be an affliction by divine command; or should the flocks prosper and multiply, the prosperity is attributed to divine interference. . . . Thus there is great light thrown upon many Old Testament passages by the experience of the present customs and figures of speech of the Arabs. . . . With the Bible in one hand and these unchanged tribes before the eyes, there is a thrilling illustration of the sacred records. . . . Should the present history of the country be written by an Arab scribe, the style of description would be purely that of the Old Testament, and the various calamities, or

In the saying of Christ that "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Mark xiii. 31), many suppose they see a claim of Bible infallibility. But all the words of Christ together constitute only an infinitesimal portion of the Bible; they form simply a part of four out of the sixty-six books. It is probable, too, that he was not thinking of written words at all, for at that time none of his words had been written; only a few ever were written, and those not until a generation after his death. He seems to have been simply thinking of his *spoken* words as *true*, and therefore *eternal*.

Others cite the somewhat similar utterance of Christ found in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v. 18) as proving that the Bible is infallible: "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." But what was then understood by the *law* was not identical with the Bible as we have it to-day. Then there was no New Testament, and no part of one. By the law was meant simply a part (the first five books) of the Old Testament. Indeed, it is likely that Jesus meant something even more limited than that; namely, the *moral* teaching of those books. And this he taught was fulfilled (filled *full*) in his Gospel. Thus we see there is nothing in this passage about Bible infallibility.

---

the good fortunes that have, in the course of nature, befallen both the tribes and individuals would be recounted either as special visitations of divine wrath, or blessings for good deeds performed. If in a dream a particular course of action is suggested, the Arab believes that God has *spoken* and directed him. The Arab scribe or historian would describe the event as the "*voice* of the Lord" having spoken unto the person; or that God appeared to him in a dream and "*said*," etc. Thus much allowance would be necessary on the part of a European reader for the figurative ideas and expressions of the people'" (Clodd's "Childhood of Religion," pp. 236–238).

There is only one other passage that need be referred to. It is that strange and terrible one found at the close of the Apocalypse, or Revelation: "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." Of this passage two things are to be said: (1) It is found in one of the most doubtful of the books of the Bible—a book which had difficulty in gaining admission into the Canon, and which has been distrusted by many learned and devout scholars of both ancient and modern times. (2) A very little consideration shows that the passage makes no reference whatever to the subject of whether the Bible is infallible or not. It says nothing about the Bible. Indeed, there was no Bible at that time, except the Old Testament, and to that it makes no allusion. It simply refers to the "book of *this prophecy;*" that is, the book in which the passage is found—the Apocalypse. The writer resorts to the very questionable expedient of undertaking to protect his production from mutilation or change, by launching a threat or curse against any one who should presume to tamper with it.

Thus we see how groundless is the belief that the Bible claims to be infallible. Indeed, there is much in it that teaches the opposite. Jesus says to the people: "Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" Both Old Testament and New are full of appeals from external authorities of all kinds—to the reason, the heart, and the conscience of men. The Bible points out freely the im-

perfections of its leading characters and writers. Nathan could hardly have regarded David as infallible when he confronted him with a terrible murder, saying: "Thou art the man." Paul could not have known of Peter's infallibility when, long after both had become eminent preachers and teachers of the Gospel, he said of Peter: "I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed." Jesus could not have known of the infallibility of the Old Testament when he cited passage after passage from it, to contradict it and to command the opposite.[1]

The truth is, the doctrine of Bible infallibility, or inerrancy, as taught in the modern world, was unknown to the ancient Jews, unknown to Christ, and unknown to the early Christian Church. It did not come into existence until the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and was not held by the earliest and greatest of the Reformers—Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and their associates. The Roman Catholic Church has never adopted it.

But nothing is necessary to show how utterly groundless the doctrine is, except to examine the Bible itself.

Contradictions in the Bible.—Both Testaments contain numerous contradictions. These furnish evidence so incontrovertible on the question before us, that I shall cite a considerable number, though only a small part of all there are.

Attention is called in another chapter to the contradiction between 2 Sam. xxiv. 1, and 1 Chron. xxi. 1. In one of these passages we are told that it was the *Lord*, and in the other that it was *Satan*, who prompted David to do a certain thing; namely, to number, or take a cen-

[1] Matt. v. 21–48.

sus of Israel. Of course both statements cannot be true unless the Lord and Satan are the same being.

I place a few passages side by side:

"And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the Lord, I have sinned greatly in that I have done."—2 Sam. xxiv. 10.

"David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite."—1 Kings xv. 5.

In one of these passages we find David represented as having sinned in the matter of numbering Israel; in the other, as never having sinned in anything except in robbing Uriah the Hittite of his wife.

Compare these passages:

"And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham."—Gen. xxii. 1.

"O Lord, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived."—Jer. xx. 7.

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man."—Jas. i. 13.

Here we are told, on the one hand, that God tempts certain men; and, on the other, that he tempts nobody. In the case of Jeremiah we are told that he goes even farther than tempting, he deceives.

Compare these passages:

"The earth abideth forever."—Eccl. i. 4.

"Who laid the foundations of the earth that it should not be removed forever."—Ps. civ. 5.

"The earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up."—2 Pet. iii. 10.

"They shall perish, but thou remainest."—Heb. i. 11.

And these:

"Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven."—2 Kings ii. 11.

"No man hath ascended up to heaven but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man."—John iii. 13.

And these:

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; he cannot sin because he is born of God."—1 John iii. 9.

"There is no man that sinneth not."—1 Kings viii. 46.

"There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not."—Eccl. vii. 20.

And these:

"Noah offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savor; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake."—Gen. viii. 20, 21.

"Ye shall offer the burnt offering for a sweet savor unto the Lord."—Num. xxviii. 27.

"Ye shall offer a burnt offering, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savor unto the Lord, thirteen young bullocks, two rams, and fourteen lambs."—Num. xxix. 13.

"Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt offering."—Ps. li. 16.

"I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats."—Isa. i. 11.

"Wherewith shall I come before the Lord? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? What doth Jehovah require of thee but to do justly, to love mercy, and to humbly walk with thy God?"—Mic. vi. 6–8.

Compare also the following:

"There is no darkness nor shadow of death where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves."—Job xxxiv. 22.

"And David took from him a thousand chariots and seven *hundred* horsemen."—2 Sam. viii. 4.

"Michal, the daughter of Saul, had *no* child unto the day of her death."—2 Sam. vi. 23.

"And the men which journeyed with him [Paul] stood speechless, *hearing a voice*, but seeing no man."—Acts ix. 7.

"Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord, among the trees of the garden."—Gen. iii. 8.

"And David took from him a thousand chariots and seven *thousand* horsemen."—1 Chron. xviii. 4.

"The *five sons* of Michal, the daughter of Saul."—2 Sam. xxi. 8.

"They that were with me saw indeed the light and were afraid: but they *heard not the voice* of him that spake to me."—Acts xxii. 9.[1]

---

[1] Of the three accounts of Paul's conversion, found in Acts ix. 3–19, xxii. 6–16, and xxvi. 12–18, Dr. Edwin Hatch says: "The differences are

"I have seen God face to face."—Gen. xxxii. 30.

"No man hath seen God at any time."—1 John iv. 12.

And the following:

"I am the Lord, I change not."—Mal. iii. 6.

"With whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."—Jas. i. 17.

"I will not go back, neither will I repent."—Ezek. xxiv. 14.

"There is no respect of persons [partiality] with God."—Rom. ii. 11.

"He that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more."—Job vii. 9.

"And God repented of the evil that he had said he would do unto them, and he did it not."—Jonah iii. 10.

[There are no fewer than fourteen places in the Bible where God is spoken of as repenting.]

"Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."—Rom. ix. 13. (See vs. 10–18.)

"The trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised."—1 Cor. xv. 52.

Different Forms of the Ten Commandments.—Every careful student of the Bible knows that the *Ten Commandments* are given not only in three different places in the Old Testament, but in *two different forms—so* different, that one cannot possibly be identified with the other. I place the two forms side by side for comparison, only abridging each to save space:

1. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

2. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.

3. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

4. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou

1. "Thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.

2. "Thou shalt make thee no molten gods.

3. "The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep.

4. "Six days shalt thou work, but on the seventh day thou shalt

---

fatal to the stricter theories of verbal inspiration, but they do not constitute a valid argument against the general truth of the narrative." (Encyclopædia Britannica, art. "Paul.") The same is true of most of the contradictions found in the narrative portions of the Bible.

labor, and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work.

5. "Honor thy father and thy mother.

6. "Thou shalt not kill.

7. "Thou shalt not commit adultery.

8. "Thou shalt not steal.

9. "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

10. "Thou shalt not covet."—(Ex. xx. and Deut. v.)

rest: in earing time and in harvest thou shalt rest.

5. "Thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and of ingathering.

6. "Thrice in the year shall all your men-children appear before the Lord.

7. "Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven.

8. "Neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the passover be left unto the morning.

9. "The first of the firstfruits of thy land thou shalt bring unto the house of the Lord thy God.

10. "Thou shalt not boil a kid in its mother's milk." — (Ex. xxxiv.)

While in the accounts found in Ex. xx. and Deut. v. we have the Ten Commandments given in the first of these forms (the form in which we are accustomed to make use of them), in Ex. xxxiv. we are told explicitly that the second form is the one in which they were given to Moses from God, and written by Moses at God's command on the tables of stone, as the words of "the covenant, the ten commandments."

Contradictions in the Gospels.—There are many contradictions connected with the accounts we have of the *life of Jesus.* I can refer to only a few of them, and in the briefest way.

First of all there is a difficulty in accounting for the childhood of Jesus. According to Luke he was born in Bethlehem, after which (ii. 22) his parents took him to Jerusalem to perform some religious ceremony in the

temple, when he was forty days old, and then at once departed (ii. 39) into Galilee to their own city, Nazareth; and from there they went up every year to Jerusalem to the feast of the passover (ii. 41). Thus we have the childhood of Jesus accounted for up to twelve years of age. But now turning to Matthew (chap. ii.) we find a different and conflicting account. Matthew tells us that immediately after the birth of Jesus and the visit of the Magi, his parents took him (not back to Nazareth, but) down into Egypt and the return to Nazareth was not until after a residence of some time in Egypt, and the death of Archelaus, Herod's son and successor. How are these two accounts to be harmonized?

Again, there are irreconcilable difficulties in connection with the genealogies of Jesus given by Matthew and Luke. Both these genealogies trace the ancestry of Jesus through Joseph. But having done this, both Matthew and Luke tell us that Joseph was not the father of Jesus at all. Thus Jesus is claimed to have descended from David, because a man who is not his father descended from David. A most extraordinary claim! Moreover, Matthew says the number of generations from Abraham to David is fourteen, and from David to the Captivity fourteen, and from the Captivity to Christ fourteen. But if we look carefully at the genealogy, as he himself gives it, the number from Abraham to David is only *thirteen*, and the number from the Captivity to Christ is only *thirteen*. Furthermore, the genealogies of Joseph, the husband of Mary (called the genealogies of *Jesus*, but not the genealogy of Jesus at all unless Joseph was Jesus' father), as given by Matthew and Luke, are radically different, agreeing in only fifteen names in the whole list, and differing in forty names. Now, when we bear in

mind that these genealogies both run back in the male line, from son to father, and then grandfather, and then great-grandfather, and so on, we see that divergence can mean nothing else but error in one or the other of the authorities, or both. Nor may we suppose that one genealogy is that of Mary. Such a supposition rests on not a shadow of evidence, while it is positively contradicted by the language of the text.

Passing on from the birth and childhood to the ministry of Jesus, there are many more discrepancies and contradictions. For example, in the Gospel of Mark Jesus is represented as going to the wilderness *immediately* after his baptism, and remaining there forty days. But when we turn to John, he tells us that on the third day after the baptism Jesus is in Cana of Galilee at a wedding, and not a word is said about any wilderness or temptation. Of course both these accounts cannot be true, unless Jesus can have been in two places, one in the northern part of Palestine and the other in the southern, at the same time.

The inscription on the cross is given differently by each of the Gospel writers, as follows:

"This is Jesus, the King of the Jews" (Matt. xxvii. 37).

"The King of the Jews" (Mark xv. 26).

"This is the King of the Jews" (Luke xxiii. 38).

"Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews" (John xix. 19).

Of course only one of the four can be correct. Or, if it be claimed that, as the inscription was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, the form may possibly have varied in these different languages, and one Gospel writer may have reported one form and another another, even then the difficulty is only slightly lessened; for this would give

us only *three* varieties of form, whereas we have coming down to us *four*. So that still we are obliged to confess that at least one of the Gospel narrators has made a mistake.

One case more. Paul tells us (1 Cor. xv. 5) that Christ was seen of the *twelve* apostles after his resurrection. But there were not twelve apostles to see him; there were only *eleven:* since we are told that Judas had hanged himself, and the twelfth apostle, Matthias, was not elected until after Christ's ascension.

There are several very plain contradictions in the accounts given of the resurrection, and of the events occurring between the resurrection and ascension; but I pass by these, as well as many others in various parts of both the Old Testament and the New.

Of course I am aware of the reply which is but too often made to citations like these; namely, the reply of anger and denunciation, that any one should presume to let these contradictions be known, coupled with the declaration that they are only "the invention of infidels," which "have been answered a thousand times." To all this I need only say they are not the *invention* of anybody; they are simply plain, straightforward *facts*, which refuse to accommodate themselves to the wish of either "infidel" or Christian. As to their having been "answered a thousand times," it is enough to say they have been *replied to* a thousand times; they have never been *answered* at all. The dogmatist may deny them; the investigator who loves truth confesses them. Confession is the only answer that can be made to them. Few of them are of a character to invalidate the general historic fidelity and value of the Bible, but they overturn utterly the doctrine of its inerrancy.

CHAPTER XXV.

BIBLE INFALLIBILITY IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN SCHOLARSHIP.—II.

I PASS on now to notice other things in the Bible which it is impossible to reconcile with the theory of infallibility. Concerning these I shall be as brief as possible, citing only illustrations enough to make my meaning clear.

(1.) **Things Absurd.**—The Bible contains many things intrinsically absurd. For example, the statement that the first woman was made of a rib taken out of the first man's side; the accounts of a serpent, and of an ass, talking; the stories of Jonah living three days within a fish (Matt. xii. 40, common version, says a *whale*), and of Nebuchadnezzar eating grass like an ox for seven years.[1] When we find such stories as these in any of the sacred books of the world except our own, we do not for a

[1] In this connection it is in place to notice also discrepancies like the following: "Sarah, at the time of her visit to Gerar, where her beauty exposed her, as in Egypt, to such grave peril, is found to be over ninety years old (Gen. xx.; xvii. 17); Ishmael, on being led away by his mother's hand, and cast away by her under a bush to die (Gen. xxi. 14, 15), proves to be between fourteen and twenty (Gen. xvi. 16; xvii. 25; xxi. 5, 8); Jacob, who went to Padan-aram at about forty (Gen. xxvi. 34; xxvii. 46; xxviii. 1), and lived there twenty years (Gen. xxxi. 38, 41), during which time Joseph was born (Gen. xxx. 24), is yet said to have been over ninety at Joseph's birth (Gen. xli. 46; xlvii. 9); and Benjamin, the little lad whom his father cannot spare out of his presence (Gen. xliii. 8; xliv. 20, 22, 30), proves to be at that very time the father of ten children (Gen. xlvi. 21)" (E. H. Hall, in *Unitarian Review*, November, 1880, p. 435).

moment think of believing them. We say they are so absurd that of course we cannot believe them. But do they become any less absurd by being found in our own sacred book?[1]

(2.) **Historical Mistakes.**—The Bible contains accounts and statements not historically correct. For example: We read in Luke that Augustus Cæsar, the Roman emperor, issued a decree that "all the world should be taxed"—that is, enrolled or registered for the purposes of a census; and that it was in connection with the carrying into effect of this decree, when Cyrenius was governor of Syria, that Joseph and Mary went, as the decree required them to do, to Bethlehem, Joseph's native city, to be taxed (registered); and while they were there Jesus was born. (See Luke, second chapter.)

Now, in connection with this account there are no less than three or four distinct mistakes. In the first place, history is silent as to a census of the *whole* (Roman) world ever having been made at all. In the second place, it is true that Cyrenius (Quirinius) did make an enrollment in Palestine, but it was confined to Judea and Samaria, and did not extend to Galilee, and hence Joseph's household (in Nazareth) could not have been affected by it. In the third place, it did not take place until ten years after the death of Herod, instead of during the reign of Herod, as the account of Luke states. Finally, at the time of the birth of Jesus the governor of Syria was not Cyrenius (Quirinius) but Quintus Sentius Saturninus.

---

[1] I mean, these stories are absurd when we look at them as accounts of *actual events*. When looked at as we look at similar stories in other sacred books—viz., as *legends* and *myths*—they are all interesting, and some of them are even beautiful and instructive.

Take another example. In Matt. xxiii. 35, it is stated that the Jews "slew Zacharias, *son of Barachias*, between the temple and the altar." This is an error. It was Zechariah, *son of Jehoiada*, quite a different man, who was thus murdered. (See 2 Chron. xxiv. 20–22.) Zacharias, son of *Barachias*, lived some 230 years later. There are a considerable number of as plain cases of historical error as these.

I do not point out these errors because of their great importance in themselves, or because they greatly diminish the general reliability of the Bible history, but only because of their bearing upon the subject of infallibility. It is not enough for an inerrant book to be generally reliable: it must be accurate in everything. If it errs in anything its infallibility is gone.

(3.) **Scientific Errors.**—In the Book of Leviticus we find the Israelites forbidden to eat the flesh of the hare, "because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof." Here the writer is mistaken as to a scientific fact: the hare does not chew the cud. Numerous statements may be found which are opposed to science, particularly in the Old Testament. The accounts given in Genesis of the creation and of the deluge are illustrations. The story of the standing still of the sun at the command of Joshua is another. Attempts are made to harmonize these with science; but the distorting of language that has to be resorted to in order to accomplish even a semblance of reconciliation is such as would be tolerated nowhere outside of theological discussion; indeed, it is such as destroys the signification of human speech, making it mean anything or nothing.[1]

[1] See pp. 14, 15. Compare the disingenuous subtleties, distortions of language, and special pleadings of the majority of "harmonizers" of

(4.) Exaggerations.—The Bible contains evident exaggerations. For example, the statements that Methuselah lived nine hundred and sixty-nine years, and Enos nine hundred and five years; and that Lamech was a hundred and eighty-two years old when his first son was born. Also, the account given in 2 Chron. xiii. of the number of soldiers in the Jewish armies—to wit, under Abijah 400,000, and under Jeroboam 800,000 *picked* men; of the latter, 500,000 fell in a single battle. That this must be an enormous exaggeration—utterly beyond possible truth—will appear when we remember that the whole country of Palestine from which these 1,200,000 "chosen, mighty men of valor" were raised at one time, was not as large as the little country of Wales. Napoleon's largest army—that with which he invaded Russia —consisted of only 500,000 men, the exact number here said to have fallen on one side in a single fight.

Again, we have an account given (see 1 Sam. vi. 19) of 50,070 men of the village of Beth-Shemesh being on a certain occasion slaughtered by the Lord because they

---

science and Scripture, with the manly frankness and fidelity to truth of such a man as Dean Stanley, who does not hesitate to say: "It is now clear to all students of the Bible that the first and second chapters of Genesis contain *two* narratives of the creation, side by side, *differing from each other in almost every particular* of time, place, and order" (Memorial sermon at the funeral of Sir Charles Lyell). See Bishop Colenso's Works; Curtis's "Human Element in Inspiration," chap. iv.; "The Irreconcilable Records; or, Genesis and Geology," by Wm. Denton; "The Deluge in the Light of Modern Science," by the same author; "The Conflict Between Religion and Science," by J. W. Draper; "The Warfare of Science," by A. D. White; "New Chapters in the Warfare of Science," same author; "The Method of Creation," by H. W. Crosskey; "Order of Creation" (essays by Gladstone, Huxley, Müller, Réville, and Linton).

looked into the ark. Not to say anything about the enormity of punishing in so terrible a manner so trivial an offence, notice the number of the slain. In no community is it ever estimated that more than one in five of the population can be men. So then we see that Beth-Shemesh (which we know to have been only an insignificant town) must have contained, to make the account true, not less than 250,000 population. Does this look like infallibility?

A little reflection shows us that the numbers mentioned in connection with the Exodus must be enormous exaggerations. We are told that among those who left Egypt were 600,000 *men*. Adding anything like the usual proportion for women and children would give us a company of from 2,000,000 to 3,000,000 persons. Imagine such a multitude—equal to the population of a great state—crossing the Red Sea, marching, encamping, dwelling in tents, wandering in the desert, and keeping together as one company for forty years. Dropping out of the account the whole enormous matter of subsistence, think what the mere organization and moving of such a host means. We read of their getting ready for their journey in a single night, and crossing the sea in a single night. But neither event is within the range of possibility. "In 1812, when Napoleon crossed the river Niemen, it took his army of about 230,000 men three days and nights to cross the river, by three bridges, in close file." But that army of Napoleon's was less than one-half as numerous as the fighting men of the Israelites, and perhaps one-tenth as numerous as the whole multitude, to say nothing about their flocks which they had with them. Thus we see that in this Exodus story we are dealing with figures that are simply incred-

ible.[1] But such exaggerations are numerous in all the older historical parts of the Bible.

(5.) **Childish Representations of God.** — The Bible contains representations of God which, in the light of such teachings as those of Jesus, we cannot do otherwise than regard as childish. For example, in Ex. xxx. 34–38 we have an account of God giving Moses very minute directions for making perfumery, of a kind that would be "holy for the Lord," to be used in the tabernacle when God came to meet with Moses; and if any other person made the same he should be put to death. So, then, we have the Creator of the universe engaged in the very dignified business of giving instructions as to what kind of perfumery is agreeable to him; moreover, making sure that he shall have it alone, and no one else shall have it with him, by attaching the death penalty to all rival manufacture of the perfume.

(6.) **Morally Degrading Representations of God.** — Some things which naturally fall under this head will be found in the chapter on the "Moral and Religious Progress Traceable in the Bible," to which readers are referred. But a few facts must be cited here.

No candid reader of the Bible can deny that it contains representations of God according to which he is not a morally perfect being. For example, we are told that God hardened Pharaoh's heart that he should not let the children of Israel go out of the land of Egypt (Ex. vii. 13, and xi. 10), and then punished him in the most terrible manner for not letting them go. Would this have been right on the part of God? Certainly not; unless morality is an altogether lower and poorer thing with God

[1] See "Bible for Learners," vol. i. pp. 284, 285.

than it is with us. Again, in the second commandment, the reason urged by God against idolatry is that he is a "*jealous* God."[1] Thus a trait of character is ascribed to him which is degrading even to a human being.

Again, we read that God ordered Moses to say unto the king of Egypt, "Let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice unto the Lord our God," when the object of their going was not that at all, but to escape altogether out of the land, not to come back. Thus we are told that God commanded Moses to lie. In harmony with this, we are told that God ordered the Jewish people, when they were ready to start on their journey, to borrow every valuable thing they could of their Egyptian neighbors, and carry it off. Thus they are commanded to rob as well as lie.

Again, while the Israelites are in the wilderness a revolt breaks out, headed by three men, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. God commands Moses and Aaron at once to separate themselves from the rest of the people, that he may consume the others with fire. But Moses and Aaron beg God not to be angry with the whole congregation for one man's sin. In spite of this plea, however, fourteen thousand seven hundred persons died of the plague, besides the two hundred and fifty insurrectionists who were swallowed up by an earthquake. And the plague would have gone on until all were dead, innocent and guilty alike, had not Aaron rushed in with a censer full of incense, which made an atonement for the people, and the plague was stayed (Num. xvi. 20–50). Thus Aaron and Moses are represented as not only more merciful, but more just, than God.

---

[1] Ex. xx. 5; xxxiv. 14; Deut. v. 9.

Again, we find it recorded that God commanded Joshua to massacre the people of a certain list of cities—all the men and women and innocent children; the only reason being so that he (Joshua) and his followers might possess their cities and their rich lands (Josh. x. 28–41). Now, if the Koran contained records of such commands, said to have been given by the God of the Mohammedans to a Mohammedan general, Christian men would never make an end of pointing to them as illustrations of the low and degraded ideas about God taught by Mohammedanism. But if such ideas of God would be low and imperfect as taught in the Koran, are they less low and imperfect when taught in our Old Testament?

Again, to mention only one more case, we read in the career of Jehu of as horrible crimes as it is possible for man to commit, all done under the command of God and with his approval. (See 2 Kings, chaps. ix. and x.) First Jehu shoots King Joram, and then orders the assassination of King Ahaziah; then by craft he obtains the heads of seventy of Ahab's children, which are packed in baskets and sent to him at Jezreel; pretending to have had nothing to do with this massacre, he follows it up by slaying all the rest of Ahab's relations and friends, and great men and priests, until "he left him none remaining." It seems, however, that forty-two brethren of Ahaziah and a temple full of priests still live; these he murders without a word of warning. "It is easy enough to see that Jehu only acted like an unscrupulous usurper, who finds the safety of his throne dependent upon the extermination of the late dynasty, while his slaughter of the worshipers of Baal was done partly as a sop to the priests of Jehovah, who had been instrumental in urging his pretensions, and partly to crush all lingering sympathy

with the house of Ahab in the minds of the people. He was a consummate dissembler, hypocrite, and murderer; and yet the Bible tells us that he did according to 'all that was in God's heart,' all that was 'right in God's eyes,' and received for so doing God's approval and reward."

What shall we say to all this? Shall we to-day, in the light of civilization and of Christianity, accept such low and unworthy views of God? Can we for one moment maintain the moral inerrancy of the book that contains them?

(7.) **Inculcation of what is Wrong.**—There are many places where the Old Testament both directly and indirectly not only sanctions but inculcates what is wrong. For example, in Ex. xxii. 18 we read the command, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." This command to put witches to death, it is probably safe to say, has resulted in the hanging, burning, drowning, and killing, in one way and another, of hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of innocent persons; just as a somewhat similar text in the Vedas (previously mentioned) has caused multitudes of Hindu widows to perform the dreadful rite of Suttee. So tremendous is the power for evil of a false precept or bad command laid upon men in the name of an infallible book!

In Deuteronomy (xxi. 18–21) we have the command to stone to death unruly and disobedient children; and that, too, on the simple accusation of their parents, without trial. Think of the enactment of such a law to-day, by one of our legislatures, and its attempted enforcement by the civil authorities! How long before the public conscience would condemn it as not only unjust and cruel, but horrible? In Deut. xiv. 21 we read: "Ye shall not

eat of anything that dieth of itself; thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is in the gates, that he may eat it; or thou mayest sell it unto an alien." How does such a way of disposing of bad meat harmonize with the Golden Rule? In Psalm cix. we have a prayer, in which the psalmist implores that the most terrible calamities may be visited upon his enemy, and not only upon him but upon his children. He prays that his enemy's "days may be few"; that his "children may be fatherless, and his wife a widow"; that his children "may be continually vagabonds and beg," and that there may be "none to show them mercy." In another psalm (cxxxvii.) the writer exclaims regarding his enemy, "Happy shall he be who taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones!" Were the psalmists inspired who wrote these words? If so, then it becomes a serious question—Was it by God, or by the Devil?

In Leviticus (xxv. 44–46) we have slavery inculcated, and that too not as a temporary institution, but as something which was to be perpetual. "Of the heathen that are round about you, shall ye buy bondmen and bondwomen, . . . and they shall be your bondmen forever." But enough!

Now what are we to say of such flagrant wrongs, sanctioned and taught in the holy name of religion? There is only one answer: they must be condemned, no matter where found. Of course, if such were the dominant teachings of the Bible, the book would be not only religiously worthless: it would be a curse to the world. But, fortunately, every intelligent reader of its pages knows that such are not its dominant teachings. They are a *part* of its teachings, however. This fact no man can evade. How, then, can we rob them of their evil effect? Certainly not by denying them; still less by defending

them, and trying to make out that they are right. *That* is to perpetuate and cherish their moral poison. The only way to render them harmless is to confess them, to confess them frankly, but, at the same time, to point out —what is true—that they mark but the beginning of the Bible's religion, not its end; they are the product of its child stage, not of its maturity; they are its sour and bitter—yes, and poisonous—green fruit, not its rich and healthful ripe fruit. The latter comes in due time. Up from that earlier low level the religion of the Bible rises —rises to the lofty elevation of the greater prophets and of Jesus. *These* are the teachers who give the Bible its *dominant* note, who represent its true religion, who have given it its place at the head of the world's ethical and religious literature.

Summing up.—I have now caused to pass in very brief review before the reader, some of the most obvious difficulties that rise in the path of thoughtful men, who, in the light of the scholarship and general intelligence of the time, try to believe that the Bible is a book of perfect and infallible truth.

It is very common for preachers and religious teachers to charge upon men who disbelieve the infallibility of the Bible, that their disbelief is something which they *choose*, and choose from bad motives—in other words, that it is something willful and wicked. I trust I have shown that this is not necessarily true. Men are *obliged* to believe that two and two make four; they cannot believe differently, no matter how much they may wish it. So, when they set about the study of the Bible, with their eyes open and with honest hearts, and find that the book contains limitations corresponding to the limitations of the people and the times from which it comes,

the mere fact that they may wish still to regard it as perfect and infallible does not by any means enable them to do so. Such numerous and manifest imperfections as have passed before us in the preceding pages rise up before their vision, and, in spite of all their efforts to see them as perfections, persist in appearing as imperfections. This being the case, the continued insistence of the church that they *must* see them to be *perfections* would seem a great and strange folly.

Driving Men into Infidelity.—Nothing can be more clear than that the result must be sooner or later to drive this class of men into hostility to the church and the Bible. Indeed, the fact, so much lamented by the clergy and the religious press, that many of the most intelligent minds of the country are already turning their backs upon Christianity, clearly finds an explanation to no small extent in the blind folly of Christianity in continuing to demand that men must subscribe to the belief in an infallible book, or else stay outside the Christian fold. Why does this folly continue?

Something Wiser and Better.—How is it that intelligent Christian men fail to see that there is no necessary connection whatever between belief in the correctness of all the statements of every kind contained in the Bible, and belief in the great moral and spiritual teachings of Isaiah and Paul and Jesus? Surely, then, the part of wisdom would seem to be, for the churches and those who care for Christianity, to take an entirely new departure with regard to this matter of Bible infallibility. Let them not persist in the useless, foolish, and inevitably losing effort of trying longer to bolster it up. There is something better for them. Freely and without hesitancy admitting all the errors and imperfections that

fair and honest criticism finds in the Bible, let them confidently rest their claim for it upon the transcendent merits that the same criticism freely confesses it to possess. Let them say, "We want no one to believe what there is not ground for believing. We are interested, as much as any can be, to find out errors and imperfections, that men may be warned against them. It is *truth* that we care for; especially do we care for *moral* and *spiritual* truth, the truth of the *conscience* and the *heart*, which is self-witnessing." The moment the Christian churches and Christian people generally take this position (and not a few of the wisest among them are taking it already), this crushing burden of carrying the imperfections of the Bible—this hopeless Sisyphus-task of apologizing for these imperfections, and trying, by hook or by crook, to convince the intelligence of the age that they are perfections—is gone, and the mental energies of Christendom are left free to be expended in better and more worthy directions.

The Bible Improved as a Book of Worship and of Practical Religion, by giving up the Idea of its Infallibility.—Nor could the surrender of the dogma of the infallibility of the Bible hurt the volume, as some fear, as a book of devotional and practical religion. Rather, in important respects, it would help it as such. For, as already intimated, the loss of the idea of infallibility would affect not in the least its higher and more spiritual teachings—those portions that are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." It would be simply the letting in of a healthy wind to blow away as chaff a multitude of things which, so far from having in them any food for pious souls, or spiritual edification for anybody, are, on the contrary, found

universally to be a hindrance to piety, and a detraction from edification.

The Doctrine of Infallibility an Enemy to Virtue, especially among the Young.—It is the growing feeling of many of our wisest and soberest minds, that virtue has few greater obstacles to contend with in our age than the wide-spread insistence on the part of the church that Old Testament morality is perfect morality. We have seen that much of it is not perfect. No one coming to the study of it with a mind unbiassed would for a moment think of calling it perfect. Even the men who contend most earnestly for its perfection, should they find precisely the same in one of the other great Bibles of the world, would, without the slightest hesitation, pronounce it defective. Why, then, is such morality set up in this day and age as a standard? Can it fail to do grave harm—especially among the young? Think of millions of Sunday-school children, with their young and plastic minds, being systematically taught from Sunday to Sunday, for years, such things as that it was right for Joshua to perpetrate his massacres of men, women, and babes; for Jehu to murder all the house of Ahab; for Moses and Aaron to falsify to Pharaoh; and for the Jewish people to put witches to death, and hold slaves, and the like (things, all of them, which we are told *God commanded*); and then reflect what a foundation all this lays, in these millions of children, upon which to build virtuous characters and sensitive consciences, and pure and high manhood and womanhood! Can anything ever compensate for or make good such an utter confusion and perversion of moral ideas in the minds of the young?

No Room for Indifference.—Thus it will be seen that the doctrine of Bible infallibility is not something which

we may any of us be *indifferent* to; it is not something with reference to which the truth may be known or not known, and all will be the same. There is a weighty and solemn religious obligation resting on us to deny the truth of a dogma which aims so cruel a blow at the character of the Being we worship, and the validity of our moral intuitions. The highest and holiest things of religion and life are very deeply at stake. As we care for religion, we must not shrink. When we come upon representations of God in the Bible that are degrading and immoral, we *must* say: "They are wrong; the men who wrote them had the low and imperfect ideas of their age; we, to-day, standing in the light that shines from Jesus, and from the eighteen centuries since, worship a God vastly higher and better than the God of those imperfect old-time pictures."

While we continue to hold earnestly to the Bible, we must discriminate. While we cannot appreciate too highly the rich legacy of moral and religious truth and sentiment that comes down to us in its revered pages, let us not be guilty of the fatal folly of consecrating error because it happens to be associated with truth. While, if we understand it intelligently and use it rationally, we may well keep the Bible in our Sunday-schools and churches and homes, as our great and, in a true sense, our sacred book of religion, we must beware that we do not make it a curse instead of a blessing to ourselves, and especially to our children, by accepting it, and teaching them to accept it, as what it is *not*—viz., *an infallible book.*

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE BIBLE AND INSPIRATION.

As we draw near the end of our study, several questions press for answers.

Inspiration.—In the light of the facts which we have discovered, may we say that the Bible is a work of divine inspiration?

I reply: That evidently must depend upon what we mean by inspiration. If by the word we understand that barren, mechanical, unspiritual signification which has too often been given to it in the past, which makes the inspired writers mere passive tools or instruments—flutes played on by an almighty player; penmen with hands miraculously guided to write a message in the inception and giving of which they have no responsibility—then we must answer, as with ever-increasing clearness and unanimity modern biblical scholarship is everywhere answering: No; the Sacred Scriptures give no evidence of *such* an inspired origin. But if by inspiration we mean something vital instead of mechanical; an inspiration human as well as divine, and divine because so nobly human; an inspiration in which men are not passive, but active, intense, alive, quickened by touch with the Infinite Mind, illuminated by "that Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," open to the incoming of the tides of the Infinite Life, and so are made seers and prophets, guides and leaders of their fellows in the things of the spirit—in a word, if by inspiration we mean

something sufficiently large, noble, spiritual, then we are compelled to reply: The Bible is rich in inspiration—inspiration which the growing scholarship of our time is not dimming, but making more clear.

Of course, no intelligent scholar thinks of affirming equal inspiration in all its parts; indeed, some portions, as we have seen, bear no marks of inspiration whatever. But when we come to other parts, words are too poor adequately to express the depth and richness of the moral and spiritual power which they reveal. From what source but that which is eternal in God could have come the truth of those great passages, in the Old Testament and the New, which instantly flash on our minds when we think of what is loftiest in religion? At what fountain but that of the world's divinest inspiration could those men have drunk, whose words have sounded down the ages, thrilling and inspiring the hearts of untold millions as otherwise they have never been thrilled and inspired?

Revelation.—Is the Bible *revelation* from God? Or, better, Does it *contain* revelation from God?

Here, again, the answer which competent scholarship gives is Yes, or No, according as we mean by revelation something large or small, adequate or inadequate, spiritual and vital, or formal and mechanical. Says Channing: "Jesus came to reveal the Father. But is God, the Infinite and Universal Father, made known only by a single voice heard ages ago on the banks of the Jordan or by the Sea of Tiberias? Is it an unknown tongue that the heavens and earth forever utter? Is nature's page a blank? Does the human soul report nothing of its Creator? Does conscience announce no Authority higher than its own? Does reason discern no trace of an Intel-

ligence, that it cannot comprehend, and yet of which it is itself a ray? Does the heart find in the circuits of creation no Friend worthy of trust and love?"

Says Heber Newton: "Within the spirit of man is the true mount of God, where the Eternal One comes down to reveal himself. Revelation is light. Wherever there is a flash of light, spiritual or ethical; wherever the dark problems of man's origin and nature and destiny grow luminous; wherever the being and personality and character of God come forth from the darkness, thrilling us with a fresh sense of worship, with higher hope and faith and love, there is a real revelation to our spirits."

These words of two eminent modern religious teachers at least hint the larger view of revelation which biblical scholarship is doing so much to give us in place of the old, smaller, and more mechanical view. With this meaning of the word, there can be no question about our Scriptures containing revelation of God and from God.

Yet, not God's *only* revelation. On the whole the highest and best, doubtless, that the ancient world produced, but not all that the world has seen. For, dare we push aside all the other sacred books of mankind—the Hindu and Persian Bibles, older than our own; the Buddhist Bible, containing some of the loftiest ethical teachings of the world, and held to be sacred and full of divine truth by hundreds of millions of men; the Chinese Bibles, ancient and venerable books; and the Koran, the Bible of some of the noblest peoples of the past—shall we push aside all these sacred books, and declare that there is no voice of God in them? For one, I dare not do that. Nor dare I deny that God has revealed himself through thousands of great and pure souls whose thoughts fill the books of all our libraries; and that he is revealing him-

self still, and ever more and more fully revealing himself as the ages go by, in nature, from flower up to star; in science, through all its domain; in art, in poetry, in music, in history, in the mind and conscience and heart of man. I dare not say that any valuable knowledge, or any helpful truth, or any noble aspiration or inspiration or impulse, ever comes to man, but it comes from God, and is in just so far God revealing himself. God's revelation confined to a single book or set of books? All the books in the world are too small to hold God's revelation. And if book-writing goes on for ten thousand years, until libraries vast as the old library of Alexandria are multiplied as the stars, still the fountain of God's revelation will be as far as ever from running dry.

The Bible as the Producer of Religion and Morals, *versus* Religion and Morals as the Producer of the Bible.—Is the Bible the source of religion and of morals? If there had never come into existence any such Bible as ours, would there have been any religion, that is, any *true* religion among men, or any morality?

Of course, in the light of the preceding discussion these questions seem scarcely less than superfluous; and yet they are so often asked among certain classes of sincere and earnest persons, that they ought perhaps to be definitely met here. It will be a sufficient answer, however, if I simply point out in a word the bearing of what we have discovered in preceding chapters upon these questions.

Both religion and morals had an existence among men long before our Bible or any part of our Bible was born. In parts of the world where our Bible has never been heard of, they have both flourished and borne beautiful fruits for thousands of years. In the earlier pages of this

book it has been shown that many of the purest and loftiest moral and religious teachings of both our Old Testament and New are found, in greater or less prominence, in other sacred books of mankind—some of those sacred books being of earlier date than our own. And when we search the literature and history even of peoples that did not have any sacred book—as, for example, the Greeks and Romans—we find there numerous exhibitions of noble virtues; while as to piety, we find there much of that also, and of such kind as gives evidence of being pervaded with the spirit of true and pure worship.

Thus we see that instead of our Bible having been the creator of morals in the world, the very opposite is true. It was morals and religion in the world—ever growing and developing, ever struggling from dimness, confusion, and weakness in men's minds, toward greater definiteness and strength—that produced our Bible and all other sacred books of mankind. And if our Bible and all others now existing were destroyed, religion and morality would produce others, and others, so long as others were needed. The foundations of virtue and religion are not in any book, but in *God*, in the *Nature of Things*, in the *Soul of Man.*

Not but that the Bible, once produced, has helped very efficiently to carry forward the moral and religious development of the nations among whom it has come; so that, as a rule, these nations owe much to it, and would have had very different histories if it had not made its appearance. Indeed, we may call our Bible, in a certain true sense, the fountain from which the particular *form* of religion known as *Christianity* has come, just as we may call the Vedas the fountain from which Brahmanism came. Nevertheless, we cannot too clearly understand that it

was not the Bible that created religion; it was religion and righteousness that created the Bible.

Distinguishing the True from the False, the Inspired from the Uninspired, in the Bible.—If there are errors and imperfections in the Bible—that is to say, if the Bible is not all infallible inspiration—how are we to know what parts are true and inspired, and what parts are untrue and uninspired; in other words, what parts we should accept and what parts we should reject? This question often causes real trouble to earnest and conscientious minds; and yet it seems strange that it should, for the answer is surely very simple and plain.

With reference to all scientific and historical questions, and all questions of *fact*, connected with the Bible, we are to find out what is truth and what is not truth in exactly the same way that we find out truth and falsehood anywhere else; viz., by inquiry. By honest inquiry and candid investigation the more important of these questions of fact can easily be solved.

As to the way we are to find out what we should accept and what reject in the direction of the *moral* teachings of the Bible, the matter is, if possible, simpler still. Indeed, there is not and never has been any serious difficulty on this score, certainly not to persons who study the Bible earnestly and rationally. The great leading doctrines of morality are clear and unmistakable. They are written in the very nature of man, and as the race advances to higher and more perfect civilization these come out into greater and greater distinctness; and that, too, even where men have never known anything of our Bible. Certainly, then, it is a strange thing if we, in the midst of the highest civilization that the world has ever seen, require to have a Bible that is supernaturally infallible in order to

know virtue from vice, and the noble from the base in human conduct. When we read other books we find no difficulty, as a rule, in forming a judgment as to what in them is excellent and admirable, and what is degrading and wrong. Why, then, should we find it difficult, in reading the Bible, to decide between the morally good and the morally bad in it? Indeed, we are all constantly thus deciding, whatever our theories about the Bible may be. This is seen in the fact that all Christian people to-day, whether orthodox or heterodox, reject such of its teachings as those about slavery, polygamy, and the putting to death of witches, and yet accept its Ten Commandments, its Golden Rule, its doctrine of the supremacy of love.

And so, too, with regard to the great *spiritual* teachings of the Bible; these all carry their credentials and authority in themselves. Such utterances as the Beatitudes and Paul's chapter on Love, it is impossible that men should mistake about. The whole matter reduces just to this, and nothing could be simpler: Whatever in the Bible, as men read it, helps them, strengthens them, gives them nobler conceptions of God, increases their faith in humanity, widens their sympathies, purifies their desires, deepens their earnestness, brightens their hope, sends them forth with a more abiding consecration to the true, the beautiful, and the good, is to be received with as much assurance as if it were spoken to every one by an audible voice from the skies. On the other hand, whatever in the Bible, or anywhere else, tends to degrade men's conceptions of God, or confuse moral distinctions, or lower their ideals of life or standards of duty, or dim their spiritual vision, is certainly not from God, if God is a being of truth and moral perfection, worthy of men's

worship; and therefore no ecclesiastical consecration or sanction, and no alleged attestation of miracles, or anything else, can make it their duty to do anything else than reject it.

Place the Beatitudes side by side with the imprecations of the 109th Psalm; or the story of treacherous Jael secretly murdering one whom she ought to have befriended, beside the parable of the good Samaritan; or the declaration in Ecclesiastes, "Man has no pre-eminence above a beast," beside John's declaration, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God"; and is there any difficulty in understanding which is from above and which is not? The simple truth is, when men take up the Bible to read it as they would any other book, without artificial infallibility theories to disturb their common sense or introduce confusion into their judgments, the trouble we are considering almost or altogether disappears: the practical difficulty of knowing what in the Bible to accept and what to reject, which, viewed from a distance, seems to some so great a difficulty, melts away into thin air, and is found to have been really little more than a theological dream.

The Bible as Compared with other Books.—Is the Bible, then, to be placed on the same level with other books? To this question I reply, in accord with what has more than once been said in the preceding pages: The most authoritative criticism and judgment seem, with almost perfect unanimity, to answer, No! Though there are in the world many cataracts, there is only one Niagara; though there are many countries that have produced noble art, yet is there only one Greece; though all nations and ages have had their poets, yet the world has produced but one Shakespeare. So, though there are

many lands that have given birth to great and noble religions, it seems not invidious to say that there is only one Palestine; and though in connection with these various religions have appeared many great and pure religious teachers, yet has the race produced but one Jesus. Nature is always sparing of her very best products, whether in the world of matter or of mind. Evidently her best moral and spiritual product of that old world from which all our great religions and the deepest streams of our moral and spiritual life have come, appeared in Judea and Galilee, and is represented in this collection of Hebrew religious literature which we call our Bible.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE PERMANENT VALUE OF THE BIBLE.

INCIDENTALLY much has been said already regarding the value of the Bible. More, however, remains to be said. Let us inquire definitely in what that value consists.

(1.) **The Bible as a Literary Production.**—Portions of the Bible, at least, have confessedly a high literary value. It seems to be the judgment of the most competent critics that certain books of both the Old Testament and the New are not out of place side by side with the best literary productions of any age or country. There is no lack of authorities who rank some of the Psalms with the lyrics of Pindar and Wordsworth; the Book of Job with the tragedies of Sophocles and Shakespeare; the Prophecy of Isaiah and the Epistle to the Romans with any religious or ethical writing in the world. Probably few persons will dispute with me when I call the Bible, as a whole, as it exists in the hands of the people to-day, our greatest and noblest English classic. The first translation of the Bible into the vernacular was made so early, and so soon thereafter it became so emphatically the one great book of the people, that it has exerted an influence in moulding the English language, and indeed English literature, vastly greater than any other book. We may almost say that the English language of to-day is formed on the basis of King James's translation of 1611. Probably quite nine scholars out of ten, of those best qualified to judge, if

called upon to select the best model in the language, of simple, terse, vigorous, and at the same time elegant English, would choose the Bible, in our common translation.

(2.) **The Bible interwoven indissolubly with every Phase and Department of our Civilization.**—The Bible occupies a far more central and important place in European and American civilization than any other book. Indeed it is doubtful if a man, voyaging through our modern Christendom as a student of its history, its literature, its philosophy, its art, its politics, its institutions, would find himself so much inconvenienced by being unacquainted with Homer, Plato, Virgil, Cicero, Dante, and enough others to make a good dozen of the greatest writers of the world, outside of the Bible, as he would by being unacquainted with the single volume of our Sacred Scriptures.

In nothing, perhaps, does this more plainly appear than in *art*. Going through the great art galleries of Christendom, one finds that the art of whole ages, and some of these the most productive since classic Rome and Athens, is well-nigh exclusively occupied with Bible themes. So closely was the art of Europe, from the conversion of Rome until very recent times, allied with the Christian religion, that a knowledge of gravitation is scarcely more essential to an understanding of astronomy or physics, than is a knowledge of the Bible to an understanding of European art as a whole.

But a careful student of European *literature*, *history*, *philosophy*, *politics*, and *institutions* will hardly be willing to say that the Bible has a *less close* connection *with any of these* than with art. Its connection with these may not be so direct and easy to trace as with art, but as we

look deeply into the heart of things, we discover that it is really scarcely less intimate.

(3.) **The Bible as a History of the Evolution of Religion.**—We have in the Bible a far more vivid and impressive picture than can be found anywhere else in literature, of what I may call the *evolution of religion and morals* on a large scale. The Bible presents us with the literary memorials of the growth of the people of Israel, through ten or twelve centuries of varied and wonderful history, from ideas of God and worship and morality little above those of the heathen peoples about them, up into such ideas as those taught by Jesus, which are confessed to stand in the front rank of the loftiest religious and ethical teachings of the world. But this point needs only the briefest mention here, as it has been considered with some fulness in two preceding chapters. We speak of the growth of the English constitution as something marvelous, and the history of it which comes down to us as perhaps the most valuable *political* bequest that the past has made to the English-speaking world. Somewhat such a bequest as this, only far more valuable, does the *religious* world have in the history of the growth of religion as portrayed in our Old and New Testaments.

(4.) **The Bible and Monotheism.**—The Bible is the *parent of Monotheism* in the world, so far as a book can be. It is worthy of note that the three great monotheistic religions all send back their roots directly or indirectly into our Scriptures—Judaism and Christianity directly, and Mohammedanism indirectly. We are apt to give the Bible credit for nothing only what allies itself with Christianity. This is wrong. Judaism is a noble religion, and has exerted, not only before the Christian era but since, a great influence in the world. When all is known that

history has to tell us, it will probably appear that our modern civilization is more indebted to Israel than we have been willing to confess, not only as regards religion, but as regards commerce, education, science, and letters.[1]

So, too, Mohammedanism is, in some respects at least, a noble religion; and certainly its influence, not only upon the world's religious history, but also upon its intellectual and political, has been very powerful and far-reaching; and if we may trust the accounts that come to us from Asia and Africa, it is to-day spreading in the world with great rapidity.

But Mohammedanism can be understood only very imperfectly without a knowledge of the Bible—so truly the child of the Bible as well as of the Koran is it; while Judaism cannot be understood at all without a knowledge of the Old Testament.

It is most remarkable that one book should thus be so closely related to the three great monotheistic religions of the world. This fact alone may justly be claimed as giving our Bible a pre-eminence over all the other sacred books of mankind.

(5.) **The Bible as a Book of Practical Religion.**—But it is not until we come to study the Bible as a book of practical religion, or *conduct*, that, after all, we approach its highest value. With all its imperfections, it must still be confessed to be, on the whole, a book of unequaled

[1] For an account of the great influence exercised by the Jews in Rome and throughout the Roman Empire during the early Christian centuries, see Professor Huidekoper's "Judaism in Rome."

For a suggestive epitome of the work they did in the middle ages in founding and endowing universities, and promoting science, especially medical science, see Draper's "Intellectual Development of Europe," pp. 414, 417 (Harpers' edition). For a fuller account see Graetz's "History of the Jews." Also see "The Jewish Encyclopædia," numerous articles.

moral earnestness, incitement, inspiration. With an iteration and reiteration that is untiring, and with an emphasis that is sometimes fairly tremendous, do all the greater writers of the Bible impress upon us the grandeur of the moral side of life—the importance of justice, truth, mercy, but especially righteousness, in human conduct. A body of men of deeper moral earnestness, or more brave and loyal to what they believed to be true and right in religion, perhaps the world never saw, than were the Old Testament prophets. Bigoted sometimes; coarse and cruel sometimes; true children of a rude age, some of them; occupying very different planes, morally and spiritually, as well as intellectually and socially—they yet, as a whole, were grand men, whose words are even to-day moral bugle-calls to the race.

Matthew Arnold has well said: "So long as the world lasts, all who want to make progress in righteousness will come to Israel for inspiration, as to the people who have had the sense for righteousness most glowing and strongest; and in hearing and reading the words which Israel has uttered for us, carers for conduct will find a glow and a force which they could find nowhere else. As well imagine a man with a sense for sculpture not cultivating it by the help of the remains of Greek art, or a man with a sense for poetry not cultivating it by the help of Homer and Shakespeare, as a man with a sense for conduct [that is, righteousness or virtue] not cultivating it by the help of the Bible."

(6.) **The Bible as a Book of Spiritual Consolation and Quickening.**—So, too, with regard to all that which we commonly call the spiritual side of life—that side of life which includes love, gratitude, reverence, prayer, hope, faith, aspiration, worship—it is not too much to

say that the world has produced no book which has proved itself equally powerful, as a help and inspirer of men here. Such passages as the Sermon on the Mount, the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, the fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth chapters of John, the fifteenth chapter of Luke, the eighth chapter of Romans, the fifth and sixth chapters of Ephesians, the twenty-third, twenty-seventh, thirty-seventh, one hundred and third, one hundred and thirty-ninth, and a score more Psalms, and selections from the last sixteen chapters of Isaiah, are spiritual food than which the voice of the ages declares there has been no richer given to the race. They are fountains which never run dry, but which, repair to them often as they would, untold millions have found always full of water for the soul's deepest thirst.

> "We search the world for truth, we cull
> The good, the pure, the beautiful
> From graven stone and written scroll,
> From the old flower-fields of the soul;
> And, weary seekers of the best,
> We come back laden from our quest,
> To find that all the sages said
> Is in the book our mothers read."

These words of Whittier, as applied to the moral, but especially to what I have called the more purely *spiritual*, teachings of the Bible, are scarcely too strong.

They suggest, too, one other thing about the Bible—perhaps not often enough thought of—which to multitudes gives it, and always will, if not a higher, at least a more tender and heart-felt value than it could ever otherwise have. I refer to the fact that it *is* the book "our mothers read"—in other words, that it is a book which has come down to us all, as the one great sacred volume

of the Christian centuries, hallowed by the dearest and grandest of associations and memories. It is not only *our* book of religion, but it is a book rich with the very life-blood of all that was highest and holiest in the hopes and fears, the joys and sorrows, the faiths, the prayers, the aspirations and yearnings of our fathers, and our fathers' fathers, and nearly all the noblest men and saintliest women of all the Christian ages. How much that means, let human hearts answer!

Concluding Words—Friends and Enemies of the Bible—"All the Bible or None."—The Higher Criticism of the Bible is at present under fire. Against the new light which scholarship has brought and is bringing to the interpretation of the Scriptures, many warning voices are raised. The brave, strong, true men who are leading this advance are often called hard names, denounced as destroyers, tried by ecclesiastical councils as heretics. From many quarters we are told that they are trying to destroy the Bible. But the exact opposite is true. They are trying to save the Bible. The Higher Criticism is constructive—constructive along the only lines on which real and permanent construction is possible. We hear much about "friends" and "enemies" of the Bible. There are no such enemies of anything as short-sighted friends. They who are laboring, as the friends of reverent and sound biblical learning are, to place the Bible upon a basis that is rational and true, and hence that cannot be moved, are the Bible's real friends. They who insist on keeping it on a perishable basis, which tends ever to melt away before free thought and candid investigation, as ice before fire, are the Bible's real enemies.

They, too, are enemies of the Bible who say such utterly senseless things as the word heard often on shal-

low lips: "The Bible is either all true or all false!" "We must either believe all or reject all."

Believe all or reject all? Indeed! This is a strange rule. Then must I also believe all my Shakespeare, or reject it all? Must I throw away my Homer if it contains errors? May I say to the astronomer who tells me there are spots on the sun: "Thank you; no, sir; my motto is, accept all or reject all; unless I can be assured that the solar face is all bright I shall affirm that no part is bright"? Shall we say to men about us: "You must give up the use of corn as food, or else eat it, husks and all; and wheat, or else consume that, chaff and all"? Have discrimination and judgment no longer any place in the world? Or, if we may use these excellent qualities still in other matters, may we not also in religion? Is there any good reason why I should treat my Bible less fairly than my Shakespeare, or Homer, or Plato?

This strange rule, "all or none," seems usually to be insisted on, as regards the Scriptures, with the thought that of course men will shrink from giving up all the Bible, and hence, by pressing the alternative, they may be driven to accept it all. It is a sort of thumb-screw arrangement, by means of which it is supposed men can be driven to adopt the theory of Bible infallibility. But what really is the result? Melancholy enough. It tends to make men hypocrites; under this pressure many will profess to believe it all, who do not, and cannot. It tends to kill thought and inquiry, and to make men bigots; for the only way that men who have once opened their eyes and seen the imperfections of the Bible can ever again accept those imperfections as perfections is to intellectually stultify themselves. It tends to produce utter rejecters of the Bible and all religion; for many, too honest to

pretend to believe what they cannot, take the preachers and religious teachers at their word, and say: "Very well; if it is accept all or reject all, then we reject all. Think, we will; reason, we will; if the Bible and religion require us to fetter our intellects and believe falsehood is truth, we prefer to turn our backs upon both." Thus does this foolish, this baseless alternative, urged by well-meaning but short-sighted and ignorant believers in an out-grown dogma, drive men unto unbelief and rejection of all religion.

It was Goethe, who could not admit for a moment that the Bible is without imperfections, who penned these words: "The great veneration which the Bible has received from so many peoples and generations of earth is due to its intrinsic worth. . . . The higher the centuries rise in culture the more will the Bible be made use of by all who are not wise in their own conceits, but truly wise."

No, the Bible is not all true; but neither is it all false. It cannot all be accepted, unless one is willing to shut his eyes, and not only trample upon his own reason and intelligence, but also upon the biblical scholarship of the world. But much of it can be accepted, and must be accepted, unless we are willing to violate every principle of correct literary and moral judgment, and deeply injure ourselves and mankind.

Probably there is no truer conception of the Bible than as a gold mine—a gold mine inestimably rich—yet a *mine* still. There are quartz and earth in no small measure mixed with the gold, as in all mines; but there is also gold—true gold of God, very precious—mixed plentifully with the quartz and the earth. Evidently, then, the part of rational men and women is, neither to resort to the

folly on the one hand of declaring that the quartz and earth are gold, nor yet the equal folly on the other hand of throwing away all, and declaring there is no gold, because they can plainly see quartz and earth with the gold; but the part of rational men and women surely is to delve earnestly in the mine, casting out, without hesitation, what plainly is not gold, but saving and treasuring up, with glad appreciation and thankfulness, rich stores of what clearly is *gold*.

INDEX.

A

Acts, Paul and the Book of, 136–143
American Revised Version, 234–236
Amos, the Book of, 101
Anonymous character of many biblical books, 48–50
Antiochus Epiphanes, 188
Apocalypse. *See* Revelation.
Apocrypha, meaning of word, 173
Apocrypha, the Old Testament, 167, 168, 173–189; the New Testament, 168–172
Apocryphal writings, value of the, 176–178
Aramaic language, 202–204
Armenian Version of Bible, 224
Arnold Matthew, quoted, 32
Authorized Version of Bible, 232–236
Authorship of Bible books, uncertainty as to, 48–51
Avesta, or Zend-Avesta, the, 1, 25, 26

B

Babylon, the captivity in, as related to the religious evolution of Israel, 254, 255
Babylon, the place where the Priestly Document was formed, 75
Baptism, the rite of, 18
Baruch, the Book of, 186, 187
Bel and the Dragon, 187
Bible, the, as a sacred book, 1; conflict of science with, 14, 15; and other sacred books, similarity between, 17–33; as literature, 44–58; as the creator of religion and morals, 291–293; compared with other books, 295, 296; permanent value of, 297–306; as a book of practical religion, 300; as a book of spiritual consolation and quickening, 301–303; "all or none," 303–306; translations and revisions of, 222–238
"Bishops'" Bible, the, 231
Bixby, James T., quoted, 14, 15
Books of the Bible, non-chronological arrangement of, 51–57
Briggs, Chas. A., quoted, 48, 70, 258
Buddha and Christ, similarity of legends concerning, 20, 21
Buddhism and Christianity, similarities between, 20, 21
Buddhist and Christian canons, similarities as regards their formation, 200, 201
Buddhists, Sacred Book of the, 28, 29

C

Canons of the Old and New Testaments, formation of, 164–172, 190–201
Captivity, the, as related to the religious evolution of Israel, 254, 255
Chadwick, J. W., cited, 50
Childish representations of God found in the Bible, 278
Chinese sacred books, 1, 26, 27
Christ and Buddha, similarity of legends concerning, 20, 21
Christianity, close relation of, to Judaism, 175–178
Christianity, preparation for, in the

apocalyptic and other apocryphal literature, 174–178, 180, 181
Chronicles, the Books of, 89
Chronological order of the Bible books, 51–57
Church, division in the early Christian, 138
Circumcision, 18
Civilization as related to the Bible, 298, 299
Clodd, Edward, cited, 32
Colossians, Epistle to the, 150, 151
Compilations, many books of the Bible are, 45–50
Composite character of many of the biblical books, 45–48
Confucius, the Chinese sacred books of, 1; teachings of, 26, 27
Contradictions in the Bible, 248–272
Corinthians, First and Second Epistles to the, 146, 147
Cross, the, 18
Curtis, T. E., cited, 206, 207

D

Daniel, the Book of, 100, 180
Daniel, additions to, 187
Dates, uncertainty of, in the Bible, 48–51
David, as related to the religious progress of Israel, 253, 254
David, Rhys, cited, 20, 21
Deuteronomy, the Book of, as document "D," 72, 73. *See* Pentateuch.
Dispersion, Jews, of the, 176, 178 (note).
Documents of the Pentateuch, described, 70–79
Documents, the earliest in the synoptic Gospels, 121
Douai translation of the Bible, the, 224, 231, 232
Dragon, Bel and the, 187
Driver, S. R., cited, 45, 72, 117

E

Ecclesiastes, the Book of, 115, 116
Ecclesiasticus, the Book of, 185, 186
Egyptian Religion, Christianity and Judaism, 21, 22
Elohistic document of the Pentateuch, 71, 72
Enemies and friends of the Bible, 303
English translations of the Bible, 226–238
Enoch, the Book of, 180
Ephesians, Epistle to the, 147, 150
Epistles of Paul, 144–153
Epistles, the non-Pauline, 154–160
Errors of copyists of Scripture manuscripts, 210, 211, 215–219
Errors, scientific, in the Bible, 275
Esdras, the First and Second Books, 179–181
Essenes, 176
Esther, the Book of, 92
Esther, the rest of the chapters of, 183
Evolution, religious, traceable in the Bible, 239–257, 299
Exaggerations in the Bible, 276–278
Excluded Books (excluded from the Old and New Testaments), 163–172
Exile, the period of the, 40, 41
Exodus. *See* Pentateuch.
Ezekiel, the Book of, 100
Ezra, the Book of, 91

F

Fourth Gospel. *See* John.

G

Galatians, Epistle to the, 147
Genesis. *See* Pentateuch.
"Geneva" Bible, the, 231
Gladden, Washington, cited, 48
God, Progress in the conception of, 240; childish representations of, 278; morally degrading representations of, 278–282
Gospels, contrasts between the Synoptics and the Fourth, 128; contradictions in, 269–272; legendary element in, 131–133; origin and character of, 117–135

"Great" Bible, the, 231
Greek text of the New Testament, 202–204, 215–221
Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, 215–221

H

Habakkuk, the Book of, 103
Haggai, the Book of, 103
Hagiographa, the, 192, 193
Hebrew land, 34–36
Hebrew people, origin and history of, 36–43
Hebrew people, early low condition of their civilization and religion, 240–250, 253
Hebrew language, 202–214
Hebrews, Epistle to the, 154, 155
Hexateuch, the, 74 (note 2). *See* Pentateuch.
Higginson, T. W., cited, 19, 30
Hindus, sacred books of the, 23–25
Historical books of the Old Testament, 85
Historical mistakes in the Bible, 274, 275
History and legend, Hebrew, 80–92
Hosea, the Book of, 101
Human sacrifices among the Hebrews, 243, 244

I

Immortality, growth of belief in, 244–246
Incarnations, divine, 18
Inculcation of what is wrong in the Bible, 281–283
Infallibility of the Bible, 258–287 doctrine of, not found in Bible 260–265; doctrine of, an enemy to virtue, 286
Infidelity, how men are driven into, 284
Inspiration of the Bible, 288–296
Interpretation Bible, false methods of, 11–16
Isaiah, the Book of, 97

J

James, Epistle of, 155, 156
Jehovah, spelling of word, 68 (note)
Jehovistic document of the Pentateuch, the, 70, 71
Jeremiah, the Book of, 99
Jerome, Saint, 223
Jesus as the greatest of the Hebrew prophets, 256, 257
Jesus as a child of his age, 175–178
Jesus and his Gospel, 119–135
Jesus the Son of Sirach, the Wisdom of, 185, 186
Jews, the, Origin and History of, 36–43
Job, the Book of, 107–110
Joel, the Book of, 101
John (the Fourth Gospel), 127–131
John, First, Second, and Third Epistles of, 158, 159
Jonah, the Book of, 102
Joshua, the Book of, 74 (note 2), 86
Judaism, close relation of, to Christianity, 175–178
Jude, Epistle of, 159, 160, 180
Judges, the Book of, 87
Judith, the Book of, 182

K

King James' Version, 232–236
Kings, the Books of, 88
Koran, the, 1, 29

L

Lamentations, the Book of, 99
Languages of the Bible, 202–204
Lao-tse, the Chinese Sacred Book of, 1
Latin, the Bible in, 222–224
Law, the, 191
Legend and History, Hebrew, 80–92
Legendary element in the Gospels, 131–133
Letourneau on Science and the Bible, 15
Levitical law, the, not given by Moses, 53–56
Leviticus. *See* Pentateuch.

Literary value of the Bible, 297, 298
Lost books of the Old Testament, 164, 165
Lost books of the New Testament, 169
Luther and the Bible, 225

M

Maccabees, the First and Second Books of, 187–189
Maccabeus, Judas, 188, 189
Malachi, the Book of, 104, 174
Manen, W. C. van. His claim that no New Testament Epistles were written by Paul, 153
Manuscripts, Old Testament, 204, 205
Mark, the Gospel of, 121–126
Martineau, James, cited, 161, 162
Massorites, the, 208, 209
Matthew, the Gospel of, 121-126.
"Matthew's" Bible, 231
Messiahs found in other sacred books, 19
Micah, the Book of, 103
Middle Ages, the Bible during, 225
Miracles, common to most sacred books, 19
Mistakes, historic, in the Bible, 274–275
Modern Reader's Bible, Moulton's, 238
Mohammedans, Sacred Book of the, 1, 29
Monotheism, progress of Israel to, from polytheism, 240–244; the Bible the parent of, 299, 300
Moral and religious evolution traceable in the Bible, 239–257
Moses, not the author of the Pentateuch, 59–79
Moses: Progress of Religion from Moses to David, 253, 254
Moulton's Bible for Modern Readers, 238
Müller, F. Max, cited, 13, 19, 22, 23

N

Nahum, the Book of, 103
Nehemiah, the Book of, 91
New Testament, how its books attained their sacredness, 8; non-chronological arrangement of its books, 56–58; what is it? 119, 120; lost books of, 169–172
New Testament canon, scriptures outside of the, 168
New Testament period of Jewish history, the, 42, 43, 256
Newton, Heber, cited, 62
Noyes, Geo. R., translation of the Bible by, 237
Numbers, the Book of, *See* Pentateuch.

O

Obadiah, the Book of, 102
Old Testament, how it attained its sacredness, 7, 8; origin and character of its books, 44–118; lost books, 164, 165

P

Palestine, description of, 34–36
Paul, the Apostle, a sketch, 136–140
Paul and the Book of Acts, 136–143
Paul, the Epistles of, 144–153
Pentateuch, the, dates of books, 78; was it written by Moses? 59–68; evidences of a later hand, 64; its composite nature and origin, 69–79; the four documents of, united, 76
Permanent value of the Bible, 297–306
Persians, Sacred Book of the, 25, 26
Peter, First and Second Epistles of, 156–158
Pfleiderer, Otto, cited, 56
Pharisees, 176
Philemon, Epistle to, 152, 153
Philippians, Epistle to the, 150
Poetical Books of the Old Testament, 106–118
Poetry, Hebrew, 106–118
Polychrome Bible, the, 237
Polygamy sanctioned in the Bible, 9
Polytheism among the Hebrews, 240–244
Predictive element in Old Testament prophecy, 95, 96

Price, Ira A. "The Ancestry of Our English Bible," 238
Priestly document of the Pentateuch, 73–76
Priestly period in Jewish history, 41, 42, 254–256
Progress, moral and religious, traceable in the Bible, 239–257
Prophecy, Hebrew, 93–105
Prophetical books of the O. T., 93–105
Prophetic period in Jewish history, 39, 40, 254
"Prophets, The," when added to the Canon, 192
Protestant Reformation, the, and the Bible, 225
Proverbs, the Book of, 113–115
Psalms, the Book of, 110–113
Pseudonymous character of some of the Bible books, 49, 50

R

Readings, various, of the Greek Text, 219–221
Reformation, the Protestant, and the Bible, 225
Religious evolution traceable in the Bible, 239–257
Revelation, the Book of, 160–163, 180
Revelation, 289–291
Revised Version, the, 233–237
Revisions of the Bible, 222–238
Rig-Veda, hymns from the, 23–24
Romans, Epistle to the, 145, 146
Ruth, the Book of, 88

S

Sacred books of the world, 1–33
Sacred books which grow out of the life of a people, 3; which originate in a man, 4, 5; origin of, 1–8; tolerate no rivals, 11; similarities between the Bible and others, 17–33; differences between, 31
Sacrifice, animal and human, among the Hebrews, 241–244
Sacrifices, 18
Sadducees, 176
Samuel, the Books of, 88
Satan, rise of belief in, 246, 247
Science, conflict of, with the Bible, 14, 15
Scientific errors in the Bible, 275
Sclavonic Version of Bible, 225
Semitic Tribes from which the Hebrews Sprung, 253
Septuagint, the, 178, 222
Slavery sanctioned in the Bible, 10
Smith, W. Robertson, cited, 46, 48, 63, 207, 208
Solomon, the Song of, 116–118
Solomon, the Wisdom of, 184, 185
Song of the Three Holy Children, 187
Susanna, the History of, 187
Synoptic Gospels, the, 119–126
Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel, compared, 128–131

T

Ten Commandments, different forms of, 268, 269
Testaments, The Historical Gap between the Two, 173, 174
Text of the Old Testament, its formation and preservation, 202–214
Text of the New Testament, its formation and preservation, 202–204, 215–221
Thessalonians, First and Second Epistles to the, 151
Theile, C. P., cited, 25
Timothy, First and Second Epistles to, 151, 152
Titus, Epistle to, 152
Tobit, the Book of, 181, 182
Translations of the Bible, 222–238
Tripitaka, the, 1, 28
Twentieth Century New Testament, the, 238
Tyndale and his translation of the Bible, 227–231

V

Value of the Bible, the permanent, 297–306

Van Manen. *See* Manen
Vedas, the, 1; hymns from the, 23, 24
Version, the Authorized, 232–236
Version, the Revised, 233–237
Vowels, the Hebrew language written without, 205–208
Vulgate, the, 223, 224

W

Weiss, John, cited, 15
Widows burned on the funeral pile of their husbands, as result of text of Vedas, 9
Wisdom literature of the Hebrews 184, 255
Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach, the, 185, 186
Wisdom of Solomon, Book of the, 184, 185
Wycliffe and his translation of the Bible, 226, 227, 230

Z

Zechariah, the Book of, 103
Zend-Avesta. *See* Avesta
Zephaniah, the Book of, 103
Zoroaster, religion of, 25, 26